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THE RAMAYAN

Translated from the Original of Valmiki

A Modernised Version in English Prose

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[SECOND EDITION]



BY

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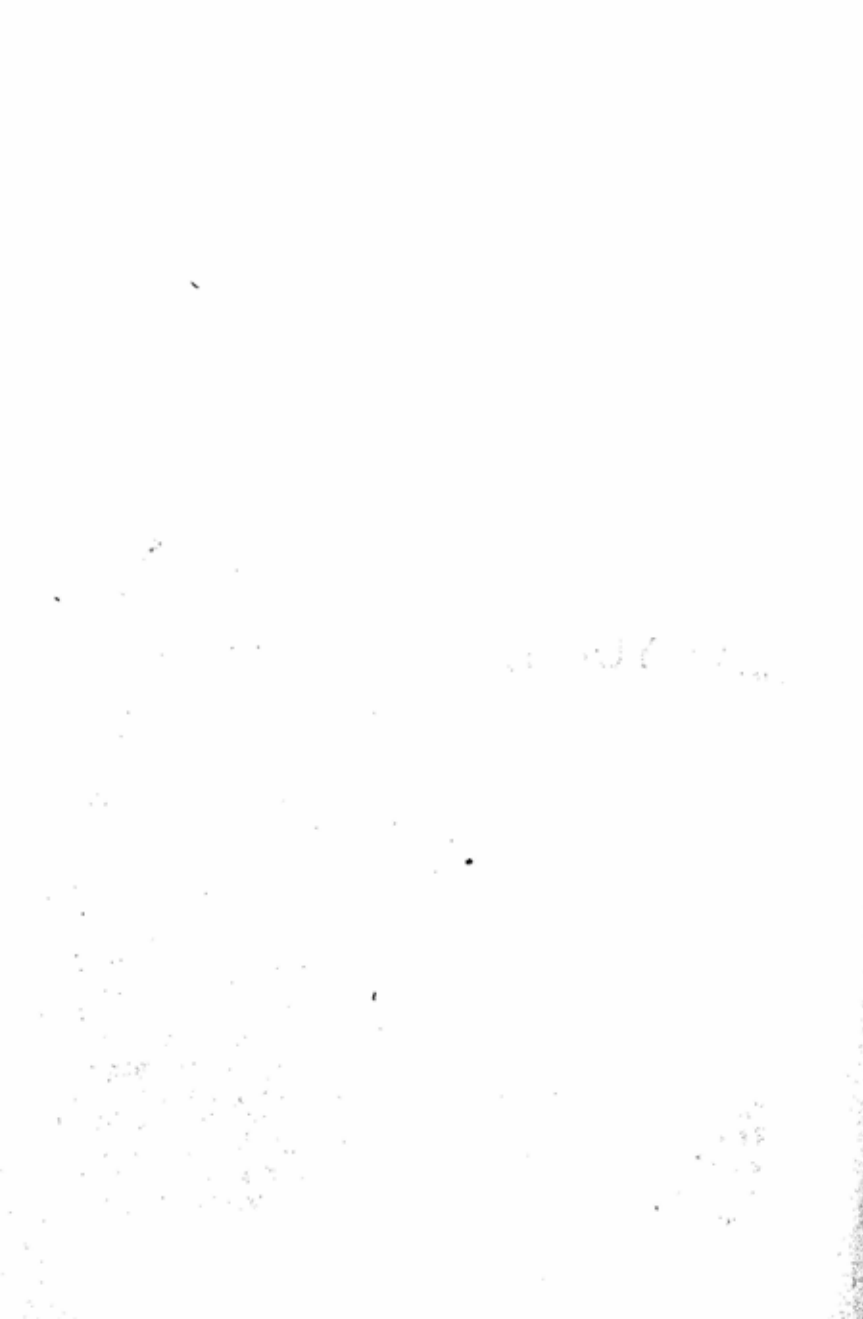
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YUDHYA KANDAM



THE RAMAYAN

YUDHYA KANDAM

CHAPTER I.

RAM'S DESPAIR.

Having heard everything in details about Janaki from Hanuman, noble Ram said in a contented mind, "Hanuman has easily accomplished what a man cannot even dare conceive. I do not see any one else, besides the feathered King Garura and the Wind, and this great hero who is capable of crossing the ocean.

The city of Lanka is protected by Ravan and is inaccessible even to the Devas and the Danavas. Who can enter the city by his own prowess and come back alive? He who is not mighty like Hanuman can never dare to do so. He has proved himself a worthy servant of the Kapi king, Sugriva by achieving this arduous deed. He is certainly an excellent fellow who after performing the duty appointed by his master, out of his own accord puts his hand in other matters. He is a mediocre person who does not perform anything else, besides the task allotted to him by his master. He is a bad fellow, rather worst, who inspite of his ability does not even perform the appointed work. This hero has performed the work appointed by his master and has become victorious thus has satisfied Sugriva. In fact, he has saved myself, Lakshman, nay even the line of Raghu by bringing information about Janaki. But I am sorry that I could not reward him properly for this act. Now only a friendly embrace is all that I can give and with delight I give you that."

Saying this, Ram. with his hairs standing on their ends embraced Hanuman in joy and after thinking for a while, began to speak again before Sugriva. Now, the whereabouts of Janaki have been gathered, but my mind sinks thinking about the crossing of the sea. Vast impassable sea! I know not how the Vanaras will cross the ocean? O, Hanuman! You have brought news of Janaki now tell me the means of crossing the sea" Saying this, Ram began to think with a sorrow-laden heart.

Then Sugriva, the King of the Kapis, seeing Ram extremely nervous began to speak. "O hero! Why hast thou been cast down with sorrow like an ordinary man? Cast off your sorrows as an ungrateful person abandons friendship. Now, information of worshipful Janaki has been received and the whereabouts of the enemy's city, Lanka, have been gathered then why you lament thus? You are intelligent and learned, now cast off your weakness, surely we shall cross the sea, enter Lanka destroy the enemy. Who becomes depressed with sorrow, danger thickens round him and he suffers greatly. These Vanara-leaders are exceedingly mighty and powerful, and they are ready even to enter into flames for your good. At their joy, it seems to me that we shall rescue Janaki by destroying the enemy. O hero! Now think of the means. Just devise how a bridge can be constructed across the sea so that we can easily reach the city of Lanka. Unless a causeway is made, even the Gods and the Asuras¹ dare not attack Lanka. It is necessary to build a bridge up to Lanka. If the Vanaras can cross the sea we shall surely be victorious. To speak the truth, this is my conviction strengthened by the joy of Vanaras. Now cast off this injurious despair, for despair frustrates all human endeavours. Just display your valour, valour is one's ornament you are versed in all the shastras and most intelligent now make preparation for the destruction

1 In the original Vedic verse 'Asura' means those who has "life and vigour."

of the enemy with the help of warrior-friends like myself. When you stand up for a fight with bow in your hand, I find none in three worlds who can face you then. Everything depends upon these Vanaras and if you depend on them you won't have any occasion for despair. Now, be fired up with rage, a gentle Kshatriya becomes worthless and devoid of energy. Moreover, there is very few who is not afraid of a man of violent temper. However, now devise the means of crossing the ocean with us. If the means are ascertained, certainly we shall be victorious. The mighty Vanaras will destroy your enemy by hurling bows and stones. I find various kinds of auspicious signs and from feeling of satisfaction in my mind, I think that fortune of victory will soon be within your grasp.

CHAPTER II

HANUMAN'S NARRATION.

The Ram having agreed to Sugriva's reasonable words, spoke to Hanuman. "O hero! I shall anyhow cross the sea. Now I ask you, how many forts there are in Lanka. What is the number of troops? Is the city-gate impregnable? How it is guarded? Tell me what you have witnessed with your own eyes. I want to learn these, as if from my own experience." Thereupon, Hanuman replied, "Listen, I shall narrate to you how Lanka is impregnable, how it is guarded, how loyal the Rakshasas are, the nature of their army, Ravana's pomp and power and the dreadful aspect of the sea."

"Lanka abounds in horses, elephants and chariots. It has four big, massive gates in four directions. Its gates are strong and provided with bolts. In those

gates, huge stones, arrows and other instruments have been kept in readiness with that the hostile army (as soon as it will come in front of it) will be crushed. There are hundreds of sharp, iron. "Shataghni" fitted with their engines.¹ A golden wall worked with jewels encircles the city and is quite insurmountable. After it, there is an immense moat." It is exceedingly deep and full of crocodiles and fish. In front of every gate there is a spacious bridge. That bridge is guarded by a machine and the hostile army is thrown into the ditch by that machine. Of them there is one strongest and biggest of all adorned with a number of golden pillars and diases. I found king Ravan ready for war, and very cool-headed and cautious. He himself always inspects the army. His city rests on hills which are not to be climbed without any support. It is quite formidable like a fortress built by the Gods. In it, there are water forts, hill-fortress and four kinds of artificial forts. The city is built on the shore of the extended sea. No boat can sail in that vast chartless sea as directions cannot be ascertained. Hundred thousands of Rakshasas guard the Eastern gate of Lanka. Millions of Rakshasas guard the Southern gate, ten millions the Western gate and hundreds millions the Northern one. They are well armed and formidable, and they carry sword, shields and lances. With them there are four divisions of army. Quite a number of cavalry and fighters in chariots guard the inner passage. They are born of heroic families and are servants of Ravan. I have broken Lanka's bridge, pulled down its rampart and sacked the city. Now, let us somehow cross the sea. The Vanaras will surely conquer Lanka. Angada, Dwivida, Mainda, Jamvuvan, Panas, Nala and general Neela alone will be able to achieve the object. They will ruin Lanka, the city of the Rakshasas. If it is desirable to cross the sea with the Vanara host, then our preparations for war should immediately be made.

¹ Apparently some mechanical contrivances were set up for the defence of the city.

CHAPTER III

THE MARCH.

Ram, hearing everything from beginning to end from Hanuman, said, "It is not impossible for you to crush Lanka, but I have something to say. It is noon, it is not proper to lose this moment auspicious for victory so let us now set out for fight. Wicked Ravan has carried away Janaki, he won't be able to save his life anywhere. As a dying patient feels relieved by taking good medicine, so Janaki will, surely, be comforted by the news of our setting out for war and will keep her life. To day, reigns the star Uttar Falguni and tomorrow the star 'Hasta' will Join the moon. Sugriva! Now let us start. Auspicious omens are to be noticed everywhere. The upper lids of my eyes are throbbing. I shall surely be victorious and shall rescue Janaki after slaying Ravana."

At this, both heroic Lakshman and Sugriva were greatly pleased. Then Ram spoke again. "Let heroic Neela proceed in advance of the army, with hundreds of Vanaras for examining the route. O Neela! Leads your army through places, where are plenty of fruit and roots, where drinking water is crystal, cool and where sufficient quantity of honey is obtained. The enemy may poison both food and drink, so be always on guard for the safety of the army. Let the Vanaras reconnoitre the army of the enemy lying in ambush, by entering a deep forest. Let them stay here who are weak. You see the present task is to be achieved with courage and valour, so it is desirable to assemble a heroic army. Let the Vanara troops advance like waves of an agitated sea. Let giant Gaya, heroic Gavaya, and Gavaksha go ahead like two proud bulls.

1 "And nectar" occurs in the original.

Rishabha protect the right flank and formidable Gandhamadan, like an infuriated elephant, protect the left flank. I shall ride on Hanuman's shoulders in the midst of the army and Lakshman on that of Angada. We shall proceed encouraging the troops like Indra and Kuvera mounted on elephants. Heroic Jamvuvan, Sushena and Vegodarshi will guard the rear of the army."

Then Generalissimo Sugriva ordered the Vanara army to march. The Vanaras soon came out of their forests and caves. Ram proceeded towards the south with the army. He was surrounded by the heroic Vanaras, and the mighty Vanara army followed him, and Sugriva took charge of them. Every one was glad and began to set up heroic yells. Some of them went ahead to remove all obstacles from path. Some drank sweet scented honey, some fed upon fruits and roots and some carried flowery trees in their hands. "We shall destroy the Rakshasas", the Vanaras began to roar in presence of Ram. In order to avoid all obstructions from passage, heroic Rishabha, Neela, and Kumada went ahead with the Vanaras. Mighty Shatabali guarded the army with ten kotis of Vanaras, Keshari, Panasha, Gaja and Arka guarded the flanks with millions of Vanaras. Sushena and Jamvuvan, protected the rear with thousands of Bhallukas. General Neela in order to prevent various sorts of trouble went along with the army. Valimukha, Projangha Jambha and Babhasa and others spurred the army for a speedy march. The vast Vanara host advanced like an agitated ocean and over-ran villages and cities in their march, Ram riding on Hanuman's shoulders and Lakshman on Angada, appeared like the sun and the moon under eclipse! All, however, felt happy.

Lakshman, seeing auspicious omens all over spoke to Ram, "O Arya! You will soon recover Sita by destroying Ravan and return to prosperous Ayodhya. I have been seeing different omens on earth and in the

sky.¹ The wind is sweet-scented and is gently blowing in favour of the army². Birds and beasts are uttering sweet cries. All the quarters appear bright, the sun is clear and the planet Venus is bright, the polar star is shining in full. There the Ursa Major is revolving round them in brilliant light. Look, there the Trishanku star, our forefather is shining along with the priest Vashistha. Vishakha is the star of our line: look how it shines undimmed, and the star Mula fed by the influence of Nairit is being continually touched and scorched by the staff-like comet,—it is the star of the Rakshasas. In short, these things indicate the ruin of the Rakshasas. When one's doom draws nigh, the star of his line becomes oppressed by other planets. Now, water is clear and sweet, and the trees are laden with various sorts of fruits and flowers. The vast Vanara host appear like the celestial army at the time of the destruction of the Tarakasur. O Arya! Just be cheerful at these sights."

At last, the dust raised by feet (and hands) of the Vanaras covered all quarters and the sun. Like clouds moving under the sky, they passed hills and forests darkening everything in their march, towards the south, halting from time to time in places in valleys with clear water, fruit-laden forests, and up on woody hills. Then Vanaras indulged in various pranks by uprooting trees, tearing down creepers, and by climbing down rocks. Thus the Vanara host marched day and night. Their object was to rescue Janaki, so they did not want to take any rest. At distance, the Sabya and the Malaya hills were seen. The Vanaras climbed them in joy. They disturbed the forest by their speed, and mineral dusts being gradually raised by the wind from the Tahya hill covered the army. Various kinds of

1 The description appears to be anomalous. both the phenomena of the day and the night described at the same point of time.

2 cf Meghduta: "A favourable wind slowly and gently urges thee on."

flowers bloomed on the hill, Ketaki, Sinbhuvara Vasavti, Kunda, Chiravillova, Madhuka, Vanjula, Vakul, Ranjaka, Tilaka, Nag, Cheeta, Patalika, Kovidara, Mucha, Arjuna, Sinshapa, Kutaja, Hintala Tinieha, Champaka, Kadamba, Neela, Asoka, Sarala, Ankula, and Padmaka. The Vanaras were greatly delighted at their sight. The hill had beautiful lakes, they were visited by ducks, swans and the Chakravaks; they were full of the sweet fragrance of lotuses, lilies and other kinds of aquatic flowers. Deer and swine were roaming about hither and thither. Some of the places were infested with lions, tigers and bears.

The Vanaras bathed in ponds and lakes and became sportive. They partook to their heart's content fruits, roots and honey. Like fields with ripe paddy the hill grew brownish yellow with the Vanaras. After this, lotus-eyed Ram ascended the Mahendra hill. On getting upon its summit, Ram saw the vast ocean stretching far and wide, ever agitated by bellows. Getting down from there, Ram entered the woods lining the shore, along with Lakshman and Sugriva. The high waves of the sea were continually beating against the rocky shore. Ram arriving at the shore, said, "Sugriva ! We have reached the sea. My mind is filled up with strange thoughts. The other shore of this dreadful sea cannot be seen. It is impossible to cross it without a contrivance. Sugriva halted at the command of Ram and Lakshman and the vast Vanara host for their colour appeared like a second sea ! The heavy sound of their march drowned the deep roar of the sea. The army was divided into three divisions and before them lay the far stretched sea ever tossed by the wind. It extended unthwarted on all sides, no limit or bound was to be seen. It was full of fierce animals. It laughed with foam and danced with waves. The moon being up, the sea heaved in joy and the reflected moon danced in its bosom. The ocean was dreadful to look at like the nether region. Whales and Timingilas (devourers of whales) were swimming about hither and thither

in great speed. Here and there were huge sub-marine rocks¹ they were luminous, as if sparks of fire, had fallen on the sea ! The waters of the ocean were ever rising and falling. The sea was like the sky and the sky was like the sea ; there was hardly any difference between the two. The sky had stars, and the sea had clusters of pearls, the sea had waters and the sky had clouds, the sky and the sea met with one another. Deep roaring of the waves due to their clash sounded like trumpets. The sea appeared to be angry, as if trying to rise and its deep roar thundered in the wind. The Vanaras in wonder stared at the sea with winkless eyes.

1 We get in Greek classics expressions like "Wine coloured." "Olive coloured" Sea.

2 Near Rameswaram Setubandha there are Submarine rocks.

CHAPTER IV.

IN SORROW.

General Neela pitched his camp in due order on the sea-shore and Mainda and Drivida were patrolling round it for the encampment of the soldiers. In the meantime, Ram said to Lakshman. "O my darling! Grief abates with time but since dear Janaki has been removed from my presence my sorrows have been daily increasing. I am not so much sorry because Janaki is far away or that she has been stolen away by the Rakshas as I fear that her lease of life is limited. O wind! blow there where is Janaki and breath over me after touching her limbs. It will be a source of consolation to me, to feel the touch of her body in the wind and perceive her look in the moon. Alas! how bitterly Janaki cried uttering, 'O Lord, O Lord!' when she was abducted. That thought burns me now. Her love burns me day and night fed by the fuel of her absence. I shall enter into the waters of the sea then love won't be able to burn me any more. This is enough for me that I am living along with Janaki on this planet—the earth. With this consolation alone I am keeping up very life. As a piece of any land becomes wet in contact with distant stream so the news that Janaki is alive supports my life. Alas! When shall I see lotus-eyed Janaki like royal fortune after victory in war? When shall I kiss those red lips after raising the countenance a little? When will she deeply embrace me with her throbbing breasts round like twine palms? Alas! She is passing her days like a husbandless woman, whose husband I am, Janaki the daughter of king Janaka, daughter-in-law of Dasarath and my spouse, how is she passing her days amongst the Rakshasas? As the moon rises in the autumnal sky by peering through the banks of clouds, so she will rise in glory after the dispersion of the Rakshasas by my arms. She is by nature shy and merry she has grown extremely

lean in distress and by fasting. When shall I banish my sorrows by piercing Ravan's heart with my arrows? When will that chaste lady shed tears of joy by embracing my neck? And when shall I cast off all my sorrows like a piece of dirty cloth?"

By that time, the sun went down. Ram remained absorbed in Janaki's thoughts. He was some how consoled by Lakshman's words and then said his evening prayers.

CHAPTER V

RAVANA'S ANXIETY.

There Ravan was extremely morose seeing the mighty deeds of Hanuman. He said with his head bent down in shame. "You see, it is not at all easy to enter this city of Lanka, but only a Vanara entered it, got sight of Janaki, broke down sacred edifice, destroyed heroic Rakshasas and devastated Lanka. Now what is to be done? What is your decision? Just decide what may be worthy and honourable for me. Heroes say, that victory is obtained by counsel. Now let us hold consultation over it. There are three kinds of persons in society: Good,¹ bad and indifferent. Without noticing their characteristics it is not possible to classify them. One should consult with friends and persons engaged in the same act, and if necessary even other persons might be consulted. He who acts in consultation with persons, who has foresight² is the best of all. Next to him, is he who acts alone waits for chance and alone plans war and peace. And he who does not weigh pros and cons about any thing, who neglects chance and who is indifferent about his duty is the worst of all. As there are three kinds of persons so there are three kinds of counsels. When all agree to a counsel that is the best according to the science of polity. That is tolerable or second in merit when there is at first a difference or divergence of opinion, each one holding his own and each debates in a different way that counsel though there might be some agreement is the worst. You are intelligent, now do what you think best. You see Ram is advancing towards Lanka with innumerable Vanara hosts in order to attack us. It is not impossible for him to cross the sea either by physical prowess or by miracle. He can bridge over the sea or make it dry. My ministers! Such is the state of affairs. now advise what will be the best from all points of view.

1 Best not bad and worst, in the original. 2 Divine Vision.

CHAPTER VI.

VIBHISHAN'S COUNSEL.

Then Nikumbha, Rasabha, Suryya-shatru, Suptaghna, Vajrakopa, Mahaparshwa, Mahodara, Agnikatu, Durdharsha, Rashmikutu, Indrajit, Prahastha, Virupaksha, Vajradansthra, Dhumraksha, Durmukha and many other heroes sprang forward with their arms. Glowing with enthusiasm and brandishing their weapons they said in a body to Ravan: "We shall surely destroy Ram and Lakshman this day and shall cut into pieces him who has burnt down Lanka."

Then Vibhishan strove to pacify them and requesting them to resume their seats said to Ravan with folded palms. "O king! war is the last resort for doing a thing which cannot be achieved by the ordinary policy of equality, magnanimity or that of discussion. One may attack for special reasons him who is infirm or besieged. But Ram is not a blunderer, he is wise, gentle and war-like. Why do you intend to attack him? Who could divine or know that Hanuman would cross this dreadful sea? O Rakshasas! It is not wise to despise enemy's strength without knowing its true nature. Tell me what evil Ram has done to the Rakshasa-chief? Why did he abduct his wife from Janasthan? Khara first created the disturbance by over-stepping his limits, and that was why Ram killed Khara for it is one's duty in every respect to protect one's own life. Perhaps from the death of Khara, the Rakshasa-king has stolen Janaki, but this act is highly reprehensible and this will bring about our ruin. I tell you again and again that it is best to return Janaki. What benefit will accrue us from unnecessary quarrel with another? Ram is heroic and noble it is not wise

1 This is how Antenor in the Iliad insisted for returning Helen to the Greeks.

to incur his hostility, O king ! I do implore you earnestly to restore Janaki to him. Return his Janaki before he reduces this prosperous Lanka to ruins, or before it is besieged by the Vanara host. I am your brother, this is why I am requesting you repeatedly. Give back Janaki before Ram discharges his irresistible arrows, bright as the glowing sun, for your sure death. O king ! Banish anger from thy mind it destroys one's happiness and virtue. Keep up your honour, reputation and uprightness. Be thou be pleased and allow us to live with our wives and children. Then the Rakshasa Lord, Ravana, on hearing these words of Vibhishan, entered his palace by leaving everybody there.

After this, pious Vibhishan arrived at Ravan's palace next day early in the morning. It was massively built, high as a cliff and its spacious halls were symmetrically designed. It was guarded on all sides by a band of faithful men. It was peopled by intelligent and devoted followers, and its breeze was ever agitated by the heavy breath of infuriated elephants. Conches and trumpets were being blown here and there, damsels were roaming about thither. Its spacious gate was made of gold and a number of people thronged in front of it in the public street. They were engaged in various sorts of idle discussions. The palace seemed to be the residence of the Gods, Gandharvas or the Bhujangas.¹ Vibhishan in brilliant apparel entered the palace as the sun enters a bank of clouds. At the time of entrance, he heard the bards versed in the Vedas to sing the glory of Ravana. He saw the priests, versed in Mantras, standing in a file with curd, clarified butter grains and flowers in their hands.

After entering the hall, Vibhishan approached the resplendent throne of Ravan and bowed to him and after showing his honours to the king, he sat upon a golden seat as beckoned by Ravan. Then Vibhishan

¹ Mythical creatures superior to mortals but literally means snakes.

addressed the king in well-meaning words. O king ! Various kinds of evil portents have commenced since Janaki has planted her feet on Lanka. Fire does not increase in volume though fed with sacrificial offering offered with mantras. before it kindles it is clouded with smoke and afterwards it continues to emit smoke and sparks, reptiles are seen in places of worship, and in sacrificial room, kitchen and in the place where sacred fire is kept. Ants are found in articles to be offered in sacrifice, the cows have grown milkless and the elephants are without their temporal sweat. Horses are hungry and are neighing poorly. Asses, mules and camels are found to shed tears and they cannot be cured even by treatment.¹ Ravens² in flocks sit upon the roof of the palaces and cry themselves hoarse. Vultures stare even sitting on the roof of the palace ! Jackals howl inauspiciously morning and evening coming near. Thundering cries of ravenous beasts are often heard at the city-gate. O king in order to prevent all these evils return Janaki to Ram. If I have said anything against you through my ignorance please do not mind it. All the Rakshasas and the Rakshasis will have to pay the penalty for this abduction of Sita, though none of your councillors have advised you thus, but I must tell you what I have myself seen and heard. I request you to listen to my friendly advice" On hearing this reasonable speech of Vibhishan, Rakshasa king, Ravana, glowed with rage and angrily said, "I do not see anything any where to be afraid of. It is not my desire to return Janaki to Ram. To speak the truth, even if he appears on the field of battle with the gods on his side, he won't be able to stand my might."

Thus Ravan curtly dismissed Vibhishan.

1 Please mark that there was Veterinary science even in such distant past.

2 "The Raven himself is hoarse that croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan under my battlements." Macbeth.

CHAPTER VII

THE COUNCIL OF WAR

Ravan was deeply fond of Janaki and was ever absorbed in her thoughts. He became daily afflicted by the consequences of his sin and by the remorse of his losing respect amongst his own people. He began to hold councils of war with his ministers and followers, though war was not desirable at all.

Ravan clad in gorgeous apparel got upon his car worked with pearls and gems and covered with golden net, drawn by well-trained horses and proceeded towards the royal Assembly hall, and the Rakshasa warriors went before him armed with various weapons. Elephants, chariots and horses followed him in files. Trumpets and conches were blown aloud. Each inlet of the city was thronged with troops. A golden umbrella, like the moon, stood over his head, and on his two sides white chowris with filaments of gold were being gently waved. Hundreds of Rakshas lined the streets standing with folded palms. They greeted him with their salutes sang his praise and prayed for his victory.

At a little distance stood the royal hall, built by Viswakarma the architect of Heaven. Its floor paved with silver and gold and in the middle stood a crystal dias¹ worked with gold. Four hundred Pisachai guarded that hall. Ravan arrived there with resounding air by the deep rumbling noise of his car. An excellent jewelled seat awaited him. That was covered with soft deer-skin and was furnished with pillows. Ravan after lighting from his car got upon that seat and addressing his emissaries said, "some council about war is necessary. Just call the Rakshasas here."

On receiving the royal mandate. they all instantly dispersed in various directions and summoned the

¹ In some readings it is coverlet and in some these descriptions do not occur at all.

Rakshasas from their beds and gardens. Then the Rakshasas came, some on elephants, some on horses, some in cars, and some on foot. They bowed to Ravan and he received them with due honour. They took their seats according to their respective ranks. There were councillors and others. In the meantime Vibhishan entered the hall, got down from a spacious car of gold, and greeted Ravan after announcing his own taking his name Shuka and Prabartha offered seat to the assembled person. Every one wore excellent apparel, was adorned with gold and jewels. The scent of Agar, Sandal and of garland filled the air. Every one was silent and repeatedly looked at Ravan's face. They were warlike and carried arms. Thereupon Ravan, appeared like Indra amongst the Vasus. Then Ravan after casting his look round the assembly, said to General Prahastha. "My four fold forces are well disciplined and versed in the art of war now, order them to guard the city with vigilance. Then Prahastha went out and stationing troops to every inlet of the city within and without, bled back and said, "I have carried out your orders, now tell me what is your desire."

Then Ravan said, 'You yourselves know what is good or bad what is desirable or not, what will conduce to happiness or sorrows in times of danger and that action never fails what you decided after due deliberation. To speak the truth, it is due to your assistance that we are enjoying the kingdom with safety. The great hero Kumbhakarna has been asleep for six months and it is for this I do not break his sleep, but he is now awake. You know. I have brought hither Ram's beloved wife from Janasthan, that damsel is graceful, but she refuses to accept me at any cost. In the whole world there is none so beautiful like her. Her waist is slim, hips are heavy and the countenance is like the autumnal moon. She is glowing like an image of gold and quite startling like the magic illusion of Maya. The soles of her feet are reddish and soft and her

nails of pink hue. She is radiant like sacrificial fire and glittering like the glowing sun. Her eyes are expanded, and her nose pointed. I have been simply bewitched, Love overcoming my feeling of anger is consuming my heart day and night. It is even eating into my gracefulness. Janaki has asked me to wait for a year for Ram and I have agreed to her proposal. I feel quite exhausted for love, just like a tired horse. I know not how Ram will cross the dreadful sea with his Vanara host? Rather it is difficult to infer anything since a single Vanara could commit so much mischief. Though we need fear no man, yet decide according to your own intelligence what course of action is best. Formerly, I achieved victory in war against the Gods and the Asuras with your help, now help me in this matter. I have received information that Ram and Lakshman having heard about Janaki from their emissary's lips have advanced towards the sea with Sugirava and other Vanaras. Now, think of the means by which we can slay them and avoid restoration of Janaki. I never fear that a man will ever cross the sea with Vanara troops and conquer me. Not to speak of a man, none in the world will even dare do this, surely victory is on my side."

At this, Kumbhakarna angrily said, "O king the time for decision was already past the moment you abducted Janaki being bewitched with her beauty: There was time for our decision before that. Wise is that monarch who acts thoughtfully and never repents any deed done in indecent haste. In fact, it was highly wrong of you to carry one's wife by force. If you but informed us before being engaged in that act certainly some remedial means could have been found out. If any wrong act is done without any previous consultation then it becomes a source of trouble, like clarified butter offered in an impure sacrifice. The monarch who has no sense of what is to be done before and what to be done after is devoid of any sense of polity, to speak the truth, who is so fickle, his enemies always remain on their alert for his weak moments though he might be exceedingly

powerful. O king! You have acted without thinking about the consequence. It is rather your good fortune that you have not been yet destroyed by Ram. I shall however help you in battle and fight against Indra. Agani, Surya, Vayu, Kuvera and Varuna whoever he might be. I am huge as a mountain and if I rush with a bolt even Indra will be stricken with fear. Be comforted, I shall kill Ram before he discharges a second arrow after the first. I shall confer victory on you and shall devour the Vanaras. Banish your fear; eat drink and be merry and do what is good. After Ram's death in my hand, surely, Janaki will be yours."

The Rakshasas were foolish and short-sighted they submitted to Ravana with folded palms. 'We have enough of arms and troops so we do not see any cause of remorse. Thou hast conquered the Urugas of Bhogavati and captured Puspaka-Ratha by defeating Kuvera, the Yaksha king, who resides in the Kailash mountain and takes pride for his friendship with the divine Lord Mahadeva. The Danava king, Maya in order to live in friendship with you has conferred on you his daughter Mondodari. He is proud and mighty, but thou hast humbled his pride in battle. You have subdued the Naga king, Vasuki, Takshaka, Shankha and Jati in the neather region. The Danavas known as the Kaikeyas who are haughty for the boon they obtained from Gods and are invisible were defeated by you after a year's struggle and you learnt magic from them. The sons of Varuna are exceedingly powerful and they came to fight with their divisions of fourfold-forces, but were defeated by you. The might of Yama is like that of the ocean, its mace is like fierce crocodiles and sharks, his nose like violent waves, his servants like snakes, fever is like fierceness of the sea, you boldly plunged into that sea and prevented death. Every body every Rakshasa is pleased with your gallant warfare. There are innumerable formidable Kshatriyas and Ram can't be in any way superior to them

1 Infantry, cavalry, fighters on elephant's back and those who fight on chariots,

and you conquered them all by your might. Now, why should you bother seriously at all? Be comforted. Indrajit alone will conquer the Vanara host. He has obtained rare boon from Rudra¹ the God of gods, by performing an excellent sacrifice. Once the heavenly hosts was chastised by this hero. He took Indra as a prisoner of war, who was at last released at the request of Brahama, the Grand Sire of creation. O king! Now commission Indrajit he will be able to achieve the object. The present trouble has been caused by a common human being. There is no special cause of anxiety, surely, Ram will meet with death at your hand.

Then general Prahastha, dark like a cloud, said to Ravan with folded palms, "O king, what to speak of man I myself subdue the Suras, Asuras and the Gandharvas. When we were indulging in pleasure and luxury from a sense of security, then Hanuman deceived us by entering the city. Now that villain will not escape punishment so long my life is in me. Just order me I shall denude the world of all the Vanaras. I shall protect you from the fear of the Vanaras. Rest assured nothing untoward will happen to you for the crime of abducting Sita."

Then heroic Durmukha gently said, "O king we can never brook any defeat from the Vanaras, I shall save you from the Vanaras by destroying them all alone whether they enter the sea, or fly into the sky or hid themselves in the nether regions there is no escape from my hand."

Thereafter, warlike Vajradanstra angrily broke forth taking up parigha weapon stained with blood and fat. "O king? What accrues by killing poor Hanuman while Ram and Lakshman and Sngriya will remain untouched. To speak the truth, I shall alone dispense the Vanara host by this lance and slay those three villains. My Liege! I have another thing to submit. Victory attends him who is energetic and

skilful. I am now speaking about that device. You see the Rakshasas are adept in black art and mighty. Let them assume human forms and appear before Ram and tell him distinctly. 'O prince! Bharat has sent us for your help. On hearing this, Ram will at once come at Lanka with his army. Then we shall attack him on half way and destroy his army by our weapons and shall shower on them arms and stones by stationing ourselves in the sky.'

Thereupon, Nikumbha, son of Kumbha-Karna observed with angry look, Ye Rakshasas live in peace with our lord, I shall alone destroy the Vanaras along with Ram and Lakshman."

Then Vajradanstra said, Remove your lethergy be up and doing about the achievemnet of your object I shall alone devour all the Vanaras. Go and drink to your hearts' fill I shall destroy the Vanaras this day."

CHAPTER VIII

THE DEBATE.

Then heroic Prahastha after a moment's thought said, "O king! He must be a foolish person who does not drink which he finds within his reach after entering into a dense forest full of ferocious animals. Enjoy yourself with Janaki at ease, setting your feet on Ram's head. Behave like a cock and attack her again and again. What fear is there after the gratification of your desire? If there arises any cause of anxiety at all you will be quite competent to ward that off. The great heroes, Kumbhakarna and Indrajit, can subdue even Indra.

Equity, magnanimity, dissensions and punishment are the four means of accomplishing one's object, of these we adopt chastisement as our means. To be

brief, our enemies will surely be vanquished by our prowess."

Then Ravan praised Prahastha and said, "O, hero ! Just listen to an incident of old. Once upon a time, I saw a Nymph named Pejrkera was going to Brahma the Grand Sire of creation. She was bright like a burning flame. At my sight, she hid herself in fear. But I at once caught hold of her and made her naked. After that she went to Brahma like a crumbled lotus. Hearing of my conduct from her lips, Brahma uttered a curse. "Thou wicked soul ! Henceforth if you apply force against any woman your head will sunder to pieces since then I am living in fear of that curse, that is why I do not employ force against Janaki. My might is like that of the ocean and motion is like that of the wind. Ram is quite ignorant of my prowess hence he is proceeding towards Lanka who dares to provoke a sleeping lion awaiting like Death in its den ? Ram is advancing because he has not yet seen my arrows like dreadful unsubdued snakes. As the sun robs the stars of their light so I shall rob him of all his prowess. Even thousand-eyed Indra and Varun cannot subdue me. This city once belonged to Kuvera, I have occupied it by my own valour."

Then noble Vibhishan said to Ravan. "O chief of the Rakshasas ! Janaki is like a dreadful snake ; her body is like that of a snake, her thought is poison, her smile is like fangs, and the five fingers of her palm is like five hoods ! Why have you tied this fatal snake round your neck. Before Lanka is besieged by the formidable Vanaras, restore Janaki to Ram, before the heads of the Rakshasas are lopped off by the sharp arrows of Ram, return Janaki to Ram, Surely, Kumbhakarna, Indrajit, Mahaparshwa, Mahodars, Nikumbha, Kumbha and Alikaya won't be able to stand before Ram, you won't be able to save yourself if you take shelter of Surya, Vayu, Yama or Indra, or hid yourself in heaven or in the nether region."

At this, Prahastha remarked, "O hero ! In battle

we are not afraid of the Yakshas, Gandharvas why should we be afraid of Ram, a human being?"

Then pious Vibhishan said, "Prahastha! What you Mahodar, Kumbhakarna and the king have said about Ram will never be fulfilled like salvation in the case of a sinner. There is none amongst us who can slay Ram. Is it possible to cross the ocean in a raft? Ram is virtuous and highly accomplished, he is born of the Ikshaku line, even the Gods are outwitted by him. Prahastha! You are boasting simply because Ram's arrows have not yet pierced your heart. Ram's shafts are absolutely fatal and like thunderbolt. How will you be able to stand the might of Ram. To speak the truth you are enemies of Ravan in the guise of friends. You are advising him thus simply for the destruction of the Rakshasa race. Ravan is in the coils of a formidable serpent with thousand hoods. Just save him from that fatal snare. He is about to be drowned in the sea of Ram's prowess, just drag him up by his hair. I have expressed my candid opinion without any fear and I ask you to return Janaki to Ram, this will be good for the Rakshasas as well as for the king. He is a just counsellor who advising his master after properly ascertaining the prowess of the enemy and of their own.

Then Indrajit, hearing this speech of Vibhishan, looking like the preceptor of the Gods, said, "O uncle! Why do you say like a panick-stricken fellow! Even he who is not born of the Rakshasa race could not speak like this, could have acted like this. Heroic valour, might and energy of our family are not to be found only in you. What to speak of the Rakshasas as whole any ordinary person can slay those two princes then why do you frighten us thus? Indra is the king of the Gods and I have brought him down as a captive on earth, and the Gods in fear dispersed in disorder at that sight. I plucked the tusks of the heavenly elephant, Airavata. I am the terror of the Danavas and have humbled the pride of the Gods, shall I then be afraid of these two men?"

Then heroic Vibhishan said to spirited Indrajit ; "My darling ! You are yet a boy. Your intellect has not yet been ripe and you have little knowledge about what to do and what not. You are talking like this for your own destruction as being the son of Ravan, you are not preventing him from such a dangerous act. You are his son only in name, rather an enemy in the guise of a friend. You have been possessed by evil genius, you are young and rash, both you and he who has summoned you to this council will be destroyed by Ram. Ram's arrows are quite death-like and can reduce the world into ashes. Who will be able to stand them ? O Rakshasa-chief ! Go and pacify Ram by returning Janaki adorned with jewels. let us live peacefully in Lanka."

Thereupon, evil-minded Ravan said harsh words to Vibhishan in anger. It is better to live with an open enemy, or even with an angry serpent, but never with a secret enemy in the guise of a friend. I am not ignorant of the (treacherous) nature of kinsmen, one is delighted at the ruin of another. They hate him most who is the best amongst them, who is virtuous and might even be the pillar of the state, and if he be a hero they wait to pounce upon him in opportune moment ; the hearts of these treacherous fellows are full of deceit and are really dreadful I shall now narrate what some elephants are said to have remarked at the sight of a man with a noose amongst the lotuses. The elephant said. We are not so much afraid of fire weapons or noose as of our selfish kith and kin. It is they who tell others the ways of taking us captives. Therefore kinsmen are to be feared most of all. As milk is to be found in a cow, fickleness in a woman, and meditation in a Brahmin, so cause of fear lies in a kinsman. Bibhishan ! Perhaps you can not bear that I am lord of immense riches, and the Vanquisher of my enemies over the three worlds, friendship with a villainous person is as unstable as a drop of water on the leaf of a lotus, it rains or thunders like an autumnal cloud, but can never being quite wet. As an elephant soils his

body after bath, by blowing dusts with his trunk so a villainous person uproots his former love or affection. As a snake hastily leaves the flower by sucking its honey, so friendship with a villainous person quickly terminates and it is fruitless, just as a bee is disappointed ever about a drop of honey, however much it gnaws the Kasha flower. Shame unto you ! Had it been any body else I would have at once cut off his head for talking like this."

Then truthful Vibhishan hearing such harsh expressions of his elder brother stood up with a mace in his hand along with four Rakshasas, and angrily said, "O King ! You are my elder, so respectable like father, but you have no religious insight. You are greatly mistaken, do what you like, but I shall not brook all these harsh expressions. I told you what was good for you, only whose end is night he could be offended with my words. It is easy to speak what one delights to hear, but it is rare who dares to speak an unpleasant thing but meant for good as well as he who can listen to them. How could I be indifferent about your distinction like that of a brilliant plant. And could I indifferently look with my own eyes, and you to be slain by the arrows of Ram. Even he who is a great hero and skilful in the use of arms crumbles like a bridge of sands at the approach of his doom. You are my superior please forgive me for what I have said for your own good and be mindful about your safety. O king ! I leave you now may you be happy without me. O King I asked you to forbear for your own welfare. I prevented and thwarted you for your good, but that was quite unpalatable to you. To him whose end draws near the word of a true friend becomes unpleasant and disagreeable."

CHAPTER IX

THE CONSULTATION.

After saying hard things to Ravan, noble Bibbishan instantly appeared before Ram and Lakshman. He was shining like a lightning. The Vanaras spied him above the sky. Bibbishan had four followers with him they were clad in excellent apparel and equipped with armour and weapons. Seeing those five Rakshasas from distance Sugriva became anxious, and pointing them to Hanuman and others said, Look there! An armed Rakshasa with four others are coming to be killed." As soon as the Vanaras heard those words they uprooted stones and trees and said, just order us we shall kill those rascals without delay. They will surely give up their ghosts."

Then Bibbishan arrived at the northern shore of the sea. He was calm and fearless and appearing before Sugriva, said in a deep voice. There is a wicked Rakshasa named Ravan. He is the chief of the Rakshasas and I am his youngest brother named Bibbishan, he has carried off Janaki from Janasthan by killing Jatayu. Now that poor lady is confined within his palace and is always guarded by hundreds of Rakshasis on all sides. I repeatedly requested Ravan to return Janaki, but his doom being near he did not listen to well-meaning words as a dying man refuses to take medicine. He abused me and insulted me. Now having abandoned my wife and children I have sought your shelter. Ram is the refuge of all, go and tell him that Bibbishan has come."

Then Sugriva hastily appeared before Ram and Lakshman and angrily said, "Some one from the enemies has unguardedly entered in the midst of our army. He will kill the Vanaras in opportune moment as Uluk destroyed the Vayasas. We ought to be careful about our consultations and actions about ourselves and the enemy. The Rakshasas are warlike and can assume different forms at will. They do injury to others by

remaining concealed and by adopting crooked policy so they should not be believed. This new comer, certainly is a spy of Ravan, if he can once get his admission here he will see discussion amongst us, or when we shall be off our guard from our sense of confidence in him, this shrewd fellow will help our destruction. We should collect friends and not enemies. The newcomer's name is Bibhishan: he is Ravana's youngest brother, they are our enemies, how can we believe him? That fellow, at the instruction of Ravan, with four persons has sought your protection. It is proper to kill him now. When you will bask in his confidence he will destroy you, so it is desirable to kill him by striking him violently. General Sugriva became silent after expressing his opinion thus in anger.

Thereupon, noble Ram said to Hanuman and other Vanaras. "You have heard the reasonable speech of Sugriva which he has just now made about Bibhishan. He who wants abiding prosperity he should give advice even to accomplished friend. Now, I want to know your opinions in this matter." Then the well-wisher Vanaras said to Ram. "O hero! There is nothing unknown to you in the three worlds, you are now speaking thus simply to honour us and out of your regard for friendship you are wise and considerate and you have great confidence on your friends. Now let the wise consellers express their individual opinion before you."

Thereupon Angada remarked, "O hero! Bibhishan has come from the enemy's camp, therefore there is much to be believed. Treacherous people conduct themselves deftly and they strike whenever any opportunity presents itself to them such a thing is dreadful. It is proper to act after considering pros and cons of everything. One should be sought for virtues and abandoned for vice. You should forsake Bibhishan, if you find any great fault in him or take him in if he possess some great virtue."

Then heroic Sharabha said, "Immediately engage

spies to watch Bibhishan. First let him be thoroughly tested by keen spies, then accept him."

Thereafter, wise Jamvuban after quoting the Shartras said. Ravan is our mortal enemy and Bibhishan is his brother so there is much to fear.

Then Mainda after deliberation said, 'Ram! Bibhishan is Ravan's brother, first ask him everything in gentle words. First test him and see whether he is wicked or not, then do what you intelligently decide to be done."

Then Hanuman versed in the shastras and chief of the counsellors said, "Ram! You are wise, intelligent and a speaker, even Vrihaspati, the preceptor of the Gods is no match for your eloquence. Now I am telling you something, not being inspired by any ambition for eloquence, or vanity, but in course of duty. I cannot approve of what has been advised by your ministers for testing Bibhishan in the first place no such thing is possible. It is not possible to verify or test anybody without engaging him in something, but such sudden commission is not proper. What has been said about setting spies on him, it is useless to employ any spies when a thing is quite palpable. I have something to say about time and place which has been just now observed, just listen to me. Bibhishan has arrived in right time and place. Ravan is vicious, whereas you are virtuous, he is wicked, you are faultless and heroic. That Bibhishan after examining these things has come to this place is quite becoming of him. I have something to add after Mainda's suggestion for testing Bibhishan by spies. You see whenever any thing is asked, an intelligent person grows anxious. Though some real truth may thus be gathered, but if the new comer be a friend or if he seeks happiness he will feel annoyed by such fruitless scrutiny. It is absolutely an unfounded assertion to say that an enemy's intention can be gathered by mere questioning him. You yourself talk to him and gather his real intentions from his voice. To speak the truth when Bibhishan gave his

introduction no trace of his wickedness could be detected even satisfied look was seen then how could I subject him? He who is treacherous can not appear to be quite hail and cheerful Bibhishan's words were not in any way diplomatic then how could I suspect him? It is not at all easy to conceal one's real motives, they perforce reveal themselves. This action of heroic Bibhishan is not in any way unnatural, Bibhishan after considering your warlike preparations, Ravan's vanity of power, death of Vali, coronation of Sugriva has wisely come hither for throne. If we consider all these things, it is desirable to take him in Ram! You are wise I have said this noticing sincerity of Bibhishan, now do what you think best.

Then Ram versed in the Shastras cheerfully observed, "O Vanaras! You are my well wishers. I shall tell you something about Bibhishan. You see Bibhishan has come as a friend even if some fault may be detected in him still I can not forsake him now. It is not ignoble for the good to give shelter even to a bad man when he seeks protection."

Thereupon, Sugriva said with reasons, "It is not at all proper to take him in whether he is good or bad who forsakes his brother in times of danger. And what guarantee is there that he will not desert us in peril."

There Ram after casting his look at the Vanaras with a smile said to Lakshmam "What friend Sugriva has observed can not be spoken unless one is well versed in the shastras and devotion to the aged, but I know there are two kinds of reasonings one popular and the other subtle to account for the separation between brothers amongst the kings. I shall mention that now. There are two kinds of enemies, one's kinsman and the other one's neighbours those two commit mischief whenever they got any opportunity. Those who wish well are sought by the people, but sometimes they are discarded by the kings. Hearing this Bibhishan has come here what you have pointed out about the faults of taking in one's enemy has its other side too.

Bibhishan. If the brothers live in amity, there may exist love between them or there will ensue quarrel and fight. Now Bibhishan has quarrelled with his brother hence he has come here, so it is proper to take him in everybody cannot be a brother like Bharat, nor a friend like you."

Then Sugriva with folded palms observed, "O hero ! Bibhishan has been deputed by Ravan so he should be repressed. We shall be off our guard and then he will confer our ruin. It is for this that he has come here. He is Ravan's brother, so he should be killed with Ravan."

Then Ram said, "Bibhishan may or may not be silly in mind but he wont be able to do me the least mischief, I can destroy all the Rakshasas at ease. I have heard that once a hunter previously killed the pigeon's, mate but seeing him taking shelter under that tree, the pigeon received him hospitably and gratified him with his own flesh' If a bird's attitude towards its enemy be such then how can a man like me behave otherwise? Let me tell you what has been sung by truthful Randu, the son of Maharshi Kanwa, He says that enemy if ever seeks protection with folded palms you should give him shelter. It is the duty of the virtuous to protect his enemy be he coward or haughty if he take shelter being oppressed by another. He commits a great sin who does not either through fear, or intentionally give shelter according to his might to him who seeks his protection, and he incurs ill-fame. If the person who has taken refuge is destroyed in presence of him then all the sins of refugee will be heaped upon the head of his protector. Vanaras ! All these evils occur when one forsakes him who asks for protection and it stands in the way of salvation. Hence forth I shall act like Kandu and shall give him protection whoever will declare that he is mine. O Sugriva bring soon Ravan or Bibhishan, whoever he might be, I shall give shelter to him."

Still Sugriva said, „Ram ! You are virtuous honest

and there is nothing to wonder that you will speak like this. Hanuman has examined him carefully and my mind too prophesies him to be truthful and pure. Virtuous Bibhishan is wise let him come here and be friendly with us occupying the same position as we do."

CHAPTER X.

MEETING WITH BIBHISHAN.

Bibhishan thus being exceedingly delighted by the assurances of Ram cast his looks downward towards the earth and alighted from the sky with his four faithful followers. He bowed down to Ram and his followers did in their turn.

Bibhishan then said to Ram, "Ram! I am the youngest brother of Ravan, he has insulted me greatly. Thou art the shelter of all, so I have sought the protection. I have renounced all the wealth and pleasures of Lanka, my life and happiness are at your disposal."

Thereupon Ram looked at Bibhishan with eager eyes and said, "Bibhishan! Just tell me about the strength of the Rakshasas."

Bibhishan said, "O prince the Rakshasa king Ravan has been rendered indestructible by the boon of Brahma. His second brother is Kumbhakarna, he can be a worthy match of Indra on the field of battle, I am the youngest, Prahastha is the commander-in-chief of Ravan, he defeated Manibhadra on the Kailash mountain. Heroic Indrajit is his son. He fights by putting on impenetrable armour, gloves of cowhide for the protection of fingers and while engaged in fighting he would make himself quite invisible. This hero by pleasing the God of fire would render him invisible and fight terribly against the enemies host. Mahodari, Mahaparsur and Akampan are the commanders of Ravan. Their might is like their master's. Ravan's crack army will be about tens of billions. They live in Lanka and feed upon flesh and blood, Ravan fought against other kings with

this army and none can stand his assault, even the Gods flee away in fear."

Having heard all these Ram weighed everything carefully in his mind and said "Bibhishan I quite appreciate what you have said about Ravan's prowess. But I tell you truly that I shall destroy Ravan with his sons and generals and shall invest the crown on you. Then Ravan whether he enters the nether region and takes refuge under Brahma he will not escape with his life, I swear by my brothers I shall never return to Ayodhya without destroying him with his brood."

Then virtuous Bibhishan bowing to Ram said "I shall help you as much as it lie in me to destroy the Rakshasas and to conquer Lanka and I shall be henceforward enemy of Ravan."

Ram then embracing Bibhishan in great delight said to Lakshman. "Go and fetch water from the sea I have been greatly pleased with Bibhishan, appoint him as a king."

Then gentle Lakshman at the command of his elder brother brought water from the sea and performed the investiture ceremony to the throne of Lanka. The Vanshas, seeing Ram thus behaving nobly with Bibhishan chattered in joy, and praised Ram. Then Sugriva and Hanuman said to Bibhishan, "O Rakhasa-chief, just devise means by which we shall be able to cross the sea." Then pious Bibhishan said, "Let Ram seek the help of the ocean. The sons of Sagar opened this vast ocean, this Ram is a kinsman of the sea and the ocean will never be indifferent to Ram." Then Sugriva coming near Ram said, "Ram I. It is Bibhishan's desire that you should approach the ocean to cross the sea." Hearing this Ram was greatly delighted at this good advice and with a cheerful face asked Sugriva and active Lakshman to arrange everything for his respectful reception and said "This advice of Bibhishan appears to me to be very happy and proper. Sugriva is learned and you are also wise, do what you think best after consultation."

Then and then, Ravan fought against other kings with

Thereupon, Sugriva and Lakshman in respectful words observed. "O worshipful lord! What pious Bibhishan has advised is certainly favourable to us. Even Gods like Indra and others can not reach Lanka without constructing a causeway over it, so it is necessary to work according to Bibhishan's instructions. It is improper to delay any further. Let us go and pray to the ocean. Ram then sat on the seashore, and being seated on a kusha seat, like a tongue of fire on the sacrificial altar.

CHAPTER XI.

SHUKA'S MESSAGE.

Ravan had a spy named Shardula. Being commanded by his master he appeared on the sea-shore to reconnoitre the army commanded by Sugriva on the other side of the sea. He returned in great haste to Ravan and said, "O King! The Vanara and the Bhalluka hosts are vast like the sea. They are advancing towards Lanka. King Dasarath's sons Ram and Lakshman are exceedingly beautiful. They have arrived at the seashore for the rescue of Janaki. The Vanara army has infested all quarters. It is necessary to ascertain their number. Send emissaries to achieve your work by policy."

Thereupon, Ravan anxiously said to Shuka, "Shuka! Go at once to Sugriva and tell him in sweet and gentle words, 'Sugriva! You are born of royal family. You are the son of the Riksha-king and thou art heroic. You have nothing to gain or lose by helping Ram, even if there is some question of gain, I am too like your brother. Though I have carried off Ram's wife, but what is that to you. Go back to Kishkindhya. Not to speak of the Vanaras and human beings, even the Gods and the Gandharvas cannot come to the city of Lanka."

Then Shuka assuming the form of a bird soon flew

to the sky, and after traversing a great distance approached Sugriva, and without getting down he delivered Ravan's message to Sugriva from above. The Vanaras seeing him thus talking from the sky, by a mighty spring caught hold of him to clip his wings and to kill him by fist-blows and brought him down on earth. Thus being oppressed by the Vanaras Shuka, piteously cried out, "O Ram ! It is not proper to kill an envoy forbid the Vanaras. That every one who without delivering his master's message gives out his own views deserves to be killed."

The virtuous Ram out of pity towards Shuka asked the Vanaras to desist, and the Vanaras let him off. Shuka again got into the sky and said, "O King of the Kapis ! Ravan is cruel and treacherous tell me what shall I say to him ?"

Heroic Sugriva then replied in a bold tone. "Deliver this message to Ravan on behalf of me : 'O Rakshasa-king, you are not my friend, nor dear to me. I have no reason to be kind to you, nor you are my helper in any way. You are Ram's enemy and Ram will destroy you with all your kinsmen. O Villain we shall destroy Lanka with all the Rakshasas. There is no escape from Ram's hand whether you hide yourself in heaven or in hell or even if you take shelter at the feet of Divine Lord Byomkesha. I find none amongst the Rakshasas, Pishachas, Gandharvas or amongst the Gods that can save you. The only proof of your valour is that you killed old bird Jatayu infirm with age. If you boast of your prowess then why did you carry off Janaki in the absence of Ram and Lakshman who are irresistible. Have you not yet understood that he will destroy you without fail.'" Then prince Angada said to Ram, "perhaps, he is not an emissary but a spy of Ravan. has come here just to ascertain your strength. Whatever might be, capture him. so that he may not go back to Lanka. This is my view."

Thereupon, the Vanaras at once bound down

Shuka. Shuka began to cry helplessly and the Vanaras began to beat him hard. Shuka being molested by the Vanaras cried, "Alas ; Ram ! The Vanaras have plucked my feathers and are piercing my eyes. I was born at night and all my sins will visit your head."¹

Then Ram preventing the Vanaras said, "He is an envoy, so let him go."

CHAPTER XII.

THE EPISODE OF THE SEA.

Then, Ram lay down on the Kusha grass on the sea-shore, facing the east with folded palms. At that time, his arm served for his pillow, formerly that arm was decorated with white and red sandal and various kinds of golden ornaments, it was repeatedly touched by the hands of his mothers adorned with pearls and gems, and, at night, Janaki's beautiful head rested on it, that hand was like the Serpent king Takshaka lying on the stream of the Ganges. It was the protection of the sea-girt earth, it contributed to the sorrows of the enemies and to the delight of his friends. It was long like a bolt, reached up to the knees and this hand gave away hundreds of cattle in charity. Ram having made that right arm his pillow, lay silently on the shore of the ocean, deliberating either he would achieve his object or dry up the sea.

Three nights passed, Ram prayed to the ocean but still the God of the ocean did not appear. Then his anger was up and the ends of his eyes became red. Then addressing Lakshman close by, Ram remarked, "you see, the God of the ocean has not appeared to me yet, how proud is he. Haughty people consider

1 The belief was, that if a person lost his life for no fault of his but at the connivance or in the presence of another whose protection the former had sought, all the iniquities of the former will visit the latter for this sin.

gentleness, forgiveness and sweet speech in good people as weakness, and are simply despised by them as signs of worthlessness. He who is haughty, wicked or unrighteous, and who advertises his accomplishments, and he who punishes another without judging his guilt or innocence, is respected by the people! Lakshman! Fame, Victory and Reputation can not be won by gentleness. Now, it is necessary to display my prowess to the ocean. This day by my arrows, the fishes will lose their lives and their dead bodies will choke the waters of the sea. I shall this day cut in pieces the trunks of the water-elephants and dry up the sea with its Conches and Oysters. You see, the Ocean thinks me powerless because I am forgiving. It is certainly improper to forgive such a person, My boy!

Go fetch my bow and snake-like arrows. I shall even now dry up the Ocean and the Vanara host will march over its dried bed. It is the abode of the Danavas I shall surely agitate it."

Saying this, heroic Ram took up his bow and arrow. His eyes grew dilated with rage and he looked dreadful like the Doomsday fire, and after bending his bow discharged his shaft with a thundering boom, that seemed to shake the earth. As soon the shaft was discharged it burned with its own fire and in violent speed entered the sea. It heaved the ocean violently, thundering sounds were heard and the aquatic animals sea serpents were thrown up with great force, and the waves with sharks, crocodiles heaved up like the Mandara hill and burst into whirling eddies. A terrible confusion fell on all.

In the mean time, Lakshman holding Ram's bow, preventing him said. "O worshipful lord! It is not proper for you to smite the ocean thus. A man like you is never swayed by passion. Now, devise some means for the attainment of your goal." At that time, the heavenly saints appearing in the sky began to dissuade Ram in loud voice.

Then Ram addressing the Ocean said! "I shall

dry up the sea with the nether region. Its waters will be gone and dusts will rise from its bed. The Vanaras will cross it on foot. It is due to its vanity that it does not pay heed to me."

With these words, Ram fixed an arrow to his bow and consecrated it with Brahma mantras. As soon as that arrow was drawn on the bow string, the heaven and earth began to shake, the planets began to revolve in wrong directions, the sky was covered with darkness, thunders began to peal again and again and heavy gale broke down trees. All the living beings shrieked in fear and invisible creatures filled the quarters with their cries. Many lay down in trembling limbs with fear. The sea overflowed its shores, but Ram was not at all moved by these.

In the mean time, the Lord of the ocean appeared as the sun rises on the Udaya hill. His colour was of emerald green, he was adorned with ornaments, he wore a necklace of gems and a wreath of flowers over his head, and his eyes were expanded like the petals of a lotus. Like the Himalayas, he was decked with the gems that grew in him. Waves broke in to eddies round him and he was surrounded by a cloud like mist. Along with him there were the rivers Ganges and the Indus and many fire breathing snakes. Approaching Ram, he said with folded palms, after greeting him duly, "Ram! The earth, air, water, sky and light being created by God, follow the course of nature as appointed by the Creator. Restlessness and fathomless depth are my two features I can not restrain my current on account of fear, or from love of gain. I shall bear by whatever means you cross the sea and the aquatic animals will not molest the Vanaras in any manner so long they cross the sea, and for the smooth crossing of all, I shall remain as calm as a piece of land."

Ram said, "O Ocean! My Brahma-weapon is irrevocable now tell me where shall I discharge it?"

Then Ocean looking at the weapon said, "Ram! There is a place called Drumakulya just to my north,

fierce-looking robbers like the Abhirs live there ; they are vicious, they drink my water and I can't bear their vicious touch. Discharge your Brahma weapon upon them.

Thereupon, Ram discharged his dreadful shaft and where it fell it became a desert. Mother earth was greatly smitten by that arrow, and water from the nether region began to swell up continually through that rent caused by the Brahma weapon. That water-spring thenceforth came to be known as the Vrana-kupa, and water even gushed through it like that of the sea. At that time, a terrible sound like the rending of the earth was heard. That sound and the arrow dried up the water. Then Ram, powerful as a God bless that tract saying. 'Henceforth this tract will be healthy and beneficial for the animals, it will abound in fruits and roots. Flowers and milky and sweet scented things and various kinds of medicines will be found here in abundance.' In fact, owing to the blessing of Ram, the desert tract became an excellent place.

Then the Ocean versed in all the shastras, said, "O noble one ! Blessed Nala is the son of Viswakarma and by the grace of his father, he has attained proficiency in the art of construction. You too love him dearly. Now let him build a bridge over me and I shall bear it ungrudgingly. Like the heavenly architect, Viswakarma, he too is skilful in construction ;"

Saying this, the God of Ocean disappeared from there.

There heroic Nala standing up submitted to Ram, "O hero ! The God of ocean has stated the truth. I have received boon from my father and for that can build a causeway over this vast sea. Now, it appears to me that punishment (force) is best suited for the achievement of one's object. It is not proper to be charitable or forgiving towards the ungrateful. You see the God of ocean disappeared in the depth

from fear. Formerly, on the Mandara hill, my father Viswakarma said to my mother, "O lady! your son, in all respects, will be like me, I am Viswakarma's own begotten son, and I am like him, Not being questioned before I did not speak anything till now. I shall build a bridge over the sea. let the Vanaras help me in this work even from this day."

Then heroic Ram engaged the Vanaras in Nala's service. The Vanaras, huge like mountains, cheerfully entered the forest and brought down big trees on the shore. Gradually the shore became filled with Salas, Ashvakarnas, Dhavas, bamboos, Kutajas, Arjunas, palms, Tilakas, Tinahas, Vilwas, Saptaparna, Kamikaras, Chutas, Asokees and other trees. The Vanaras uprooted all the trees and brought them like the apraised flag-staffs of Indra. Darimba creepers, Coconut-trees, Vakulas, Nimbass, Kariras and Bibhitakas were brought in large number. The big Vanaras plucked huge rocks and carried them with the help of machines. These trees and stones being hurled in great force into the sea, the waters heaved and fell alternately. In fact, the sea became greatly agitated by the hurling of stones and trees into it. Heroic Nala with the help of the Vanaras commenced building a hundred Yoyana bridge over the sea.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CAUSEWAY.

Then with the help of the Vanaras heroic Nala began to build the causeway hundred Yoyonas in length. Some of the Vanaras, to protect the bridge from curvature took up plumb-line and necessary rod. Some carried huge slabs of stones some of which were dark green like clouds and some black as rocks. They began to build with trees and stones, and all were animated with great enthusiasm and energy. Every

where the Vanaras were seen carrying huge blocks of stones and trees and there was a terrific din on account of continually throwing stones and trees into the sea. Every one was eager to display his skill and energy. Thus gradually, on the first day fourteen Yoyanas were built, on the second day, twenty Yoyanas, on the third day twenty-one Yoyanas, on the fourth day twenty-four Yoyanas, on the fifth day twenty-three Yoyanas. Thus Heroic Nala with great skill, like his father Viswakarma, with the help of the Vanaras built a beautiful bridge to the other shore of the sea. Then the long bridge shone like the milky-way in the sky.

Then the denizens of heaven appeared in the sky to witness that wonderful bridge. The bridge built by Nala was ten Yoyanas wide and hundred Yoyanas long. Every one looked at it with eyes wide with amazement.

The Vanaras jumped in joy. That wonderful bridge was well-built, broad, and wonderful to look at and it appeared like the boundary line of the vast ocean.

Then Bibbishan, with mace in his hand and with his four Counsellors guarded the southern end of the bridge so that the enemies might not cross the bridge. Then Sugriva said to Ram, "Get upon Hanuman's shoulders and Lakshman on the shoulders of Angada. The sea is far-stretched and these two Vanaras, rangers of the sky, will carry you to the other shore.

At the head of the army first proceeded Ram, Lakshman and heroic Sugriva. A vast host followed protecting the sides and the rear.

Some of the Vanaras jumped into the sea, some went over the bridge and some flew above like birds. A deafening noise was produced by their march, which became mingled with the thundering roars of the sea.

Thus they gradually crossed the sea. The Kapi-chief, Sugriva, settled his army in that tract abounding in fruits and roots. Then the Gods and the Asuras

seeing this wonderful feat of Ram approached him and respectfully said, "O King! May victory attend on thee, May you rule for ever this earth bound by the seas."

Thus the Gods and saints began to praise Ram.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EVIL OMENS.

Then Ram seeing evil omens on all sides, embracing heroic Lakshman said, "Oh my darling! Let us now take our rest by encamping in this tract, a land abounding in fruits and drinking water. You see evil omen's presaging the destruction of good many people are to be found every where. Dust storm is blowing. There is an incessant earth-quake and the peaks of the hills are fast trembling! The dark-gray clouds with thundering noise raining blood. The evening looks dreadful and red like the red sandal paste. Erruption is going on in the burning sun, and ravenous birds and animals are piteously crying looking at the sun. At night, the moon is not visible much—its rays are hot and its disc appears to be dark and red, as if the moon has arisen for the destruction of the people. The sun is intensely glaring, its circumference seems to be red and a fierce, blue spot is seen in the sun. The stars are enveloped in dust and vapour, as if the Doomsday has come. You see, crows, vultures hawks are flying about hither and thither. The jackals are howling presaging evils every where, Lakshman! The earth will now be covered with the arms of the Vanaras and Rakshasas and their dead bodies, and drenched with their blood. Let us to-day force our way with the Vanara hosts into Lanka—the city of Ravan."

Saying this, Ram first proceeded towards Lanka holding a bow in his hand. Bibhishan, Sugriva and others followed him with heroic roars. The Vanaras grew determined for the destruction of the Rakhas.

At that time Ram was highly pleased with the patience and work of the Vanaras.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PREPARATION FOR FIGHT.

Then Ram drew up his army in battle array.

As the Autumnal night looks beautiful with the full moon so that vast post was graced by the presence of Ram. The earth shook and became highly oppressed by the vast Vanara hosts—stretching far and wide like the sea. At that time, great noise prevailed in Lanka, and trumpet and the sounds of the mridangas were continually heard. The Vanaras were greatly delighted at those sounds and uttered heroic yells in joy. The Rakshasas heard that thundering roars like the rumbling of distant clouds.

Then Ram seeing Lanka decked with flags began to think in a sorrowful mind. "Alas! gazed by Janaki is confined there like the star Rohini overshadowed by planets." Then heaving a deep sigh, Ram addressing Lakshman said, My boy! just see this city of Lanka kissing the sky,¹ as if the heavenly architect Viswakarma from his imagination has built this city upon the high hill. Seven storied building white as the fleecy clouds stand every where in the city. Beautiful parks and gardens decorate the city. The birds are chirping in those beautiful gardens and the leaves of the trees with bees, clung to them are gently waving in the breeze, and the cuckoos were echoing the words with their sweet notes.

After this, Ram dividing his army according to the directions of the Shastras, said, "Heroic Angada and Neela would remain in the middle with their armies. Heroic Rishabha will protect the right flank of the army, and warlike Gandhamadan its left flank. And

¹ It reminds us of the sky-scrapers of New York.

I shall with Lakshman remain in the front Jamvuvan, Sushena, and Vegodarshi protect the centre and the Kapi-chief Sugriva will protect the rear, as the sun protects the western side of the earth."

Thus, Ram established order amongst the Vanara army and it appeared like a vast cloud. The Vanaras in order to crumble Lanka into pieces began to fetch huge blocks of stones and trees.

Thereafter, Ram addressing Sugriva said. "My friend! Our army has been divided according to the directions of the Shastras, now let loose the Rakshasa, Shuka; thereupon, Sugriva released Shuka at the command of Ram. As soon as he was released, Shuka instantly ran to Ravan in fear.

Then, Ravan casting his look at him smilingly observed, "Have your two wings been tied, as if they have been torn off? Did you fall in the hands of the Vanaras?"

Then Shuka replied, trembling with fear, "O King! On arriving at the northern shore, of the sea, I submitted to Sugriva in sweet words all that you had said to me. But at my sight, the Vanaras were greatly provoked and they wanted to clip my wings and slay me with fist blows. My lord! The Vanaras are, by nature, very haughty and irritable, not to speak of vanquishing them it is even difficult to talk to them. That great hero, who has despatched warlike Viradha Kavandha and Khara to the realm of death that Ram, along with Sugriva has come in the course of his search for Janaki. He has crossed the sea by building a bridge over it and he cares a fig for the Rakshasas. He is just waiting like a hero. Now the earth is covered with cloudlike Vanara and Bhalluka hosts. Peace between the Rakshasas and the Vanaras is as impossible, as between the Suras and the Asuras. Those troops will soon reach the city-wall. Either soon restore Sita or be ready for war."

Thereupon, the Rakshasa king, with eyes red with anger, as if burning everything with the fire of his

wrath said, "If all the Gods and the Gandharvas stand against me, even if the Rakshasas be afraid to render any help to me, still I won't return Sita to Ram. My arrows will fly against Ram as intoxicated bees run towards the vernal flowers. When shall I scorch Ram with my arrows discharged from the bow, like meteors burning down an elephant. When shall I eclipse Ram by my presence, as the sun robs the planets of their light when it rises in the sky? My irresistible course is like the sea, and I am as strong as the wind, but Ram is ignorant of this, therefore he dares to fight against me. Ram has not yet witnessed my arrows, like venomous snakes, so he has ventured to take up arms against me. Entering the arena of battle I shall play on my bow as upon a stringed musical instrument, the shaft is like the staff of a Vina, twang is its sound, cries of men are its music, Narach and the sound of Tala are like keeping of time. What more shall I speak of my prowess? Even King of Gods, Indra, Varuna,¹ Yama and Kuvera can not vanquish me.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SPYING

Then Ravan after calling his counsellors, Shuka and Saran said, 'You see, to build a bridge over the sea and for the Vanaras to cross the ocean seem quite incredible. The sea is vast, how it is possible to build a bridge over it? How can we believe it? However, it is necessary to ascertain the number of the enemy-troops. Both of you go in disguise and ascertain the number of the troops and their prowess. Who are the chiefs of the Vanara army who are the advisers of Ram and Sugriva? Who are in the vanguard and who are really heroic? Go and ascertain the real prowess of Ram and Lakshman, the nature of their arms, and who is their Commander-in-Chief.

¹ Neptune, Death and the God of wealth.

Then Shuka and Saran assuming the forms of two Vanaras, entered the camp of Ram's army. The Vanaras were quite formidable and countless they could not ascertain their number. At that time, the Vanara troops settled themselves in hills, caves and by the side of fountains. Many were already there, many were coming, many were seated and many were about to take their seats. There was deafening noise all over. Shuka and Saran watched everything in disguise.

In the meantime, Vibhishan detected those two spies in disguise. He at once caught hold of them and produced them before Ram, saying. "These two persons are counsellors of Ravan named Shuka and Saran. They have come in disguise from Lanka and they are spies."

Thereupon, Shuka and Saran were greatly frightened, and being despaired of their lives they submitted to Ram in folded palms. 'O hero! We have entered the camp at the command of Ravan."

Then Ram, the benefactor of mankind, smilingly said, "If you have seen all the troops and have ascertained their real nature, if you have succeeded in carrying out the directions of your master, you can safely go. If you have still something to ascertain you may again go on with your spying, or if you like Vibhishan himself will show you everything. Do not be afraid of your lives because you have been secured, but you are unarmed, besides you are envoys, it is improper to take your lives. Vibhishan! though they are spies and they have come to sow dissensions amongst us still let them go. Go back and tell the Rakshasa king to display his prowess with his friends and followers in any manner he likes, in the field of battle relying on which he stole my Janaki. I shall, to-morrow morning, infest Lanka with my arrows. As Indra hurls the thunder-bolt against the Giants, I shall cast my anger against him."

Then Shuka and Saran uttering praise of virtuous Ram, came back to Ravan and addressing him said, "O

Rakshasa King ! Vibhishan took us before Ram to put us to death, but righteous Ram set us free, when such four mighty persons like Ram Lakshman, Sugriva and Vibhishan have united together, not to speak of the Vanaras, they themselves can uproot Lanka and replace it in its original site. Not to speak of other three persons, considering the image of Ram and the nature of his arms, he alone can reduce Lanka to ruins. The army that is protected by such heroes like Ram and Lakshman and by the Vanaras like Sugriva, can not be vanquished even by the Gods. O King ! They are gladly waiting for battle, you should not quarrel with them rather should go and respectfully return Janaki to Ram,

CHAPTER XVII.

RAVAN'S RESOLVE.

Then Ravan, hearing everything from Saran's lips said, "You see, even if the Gods, Gandharvas, and the Danavas attack me in a body, even if all the people get frightened, I shall not return Sita. You are extremely timid and have been greatly molested by the Vanaras, therefore you speak like this, and that is why restoring Sita to Ram seems advisable to you. But tell me who can conquer me ?

Saying this in anger, Ravan with Shuka and Saran ascended the lofty top of his snow-white palace for reconnoitering the Vanara army. In front of him stood hills and forests and the wide expanse of the sea and its shore covered with the Vanara troops. Seeing that Vanara hosts, Ravan said to Saran, "Tell me who are the chiefs amongst that army, who are really warlike who are forward and who are encouraging them in everything ? The counsel of which hero does Sugriva follow ? What is their true prowess ? Tell me everything in details."

Saran said, "O king ! That hero who stands

facing Lanka and is repeatedly uttering heroic roars, and thereby shaking the forests, hills and Lanka with its walls and gates, is the commander-in-chief of Sugriva his name is Neela. Who is tall like a mountain peak, who is patrolling swinging his arms to and fro, who is yellow like the filaments of a lotus, who is emitting heroic yells in anger looking towards Lanka, and who is resounding all the quarters by lashing his tail repeatedly on the ground is Angada. Sugriva, the king of the Kapis, has installed him as heir-apparent to the throne. He is like Vali and is dear to Sugriva, Varuna fought for Indra so he will display his valour for Ram. He is challenging you in a fight, it is for his intelligence that Hanuman succeeded in gathering the whereabouts of Janaki, he has arrived here to attack you with a number of Vanara hosts. In his rear is heroic Nala, this Nala has built the bridge over the sea. The restive hero of silvery hue that you see at distance, is Shweta. He wishes to destroy Lanka alone with his own troops. Those residents of Chandan¹ who are roaring repeatedly are the followers of Shweta. He is intelligent and famous. Look how he has cheered up the army by drawing them in battle array. There is general Kumud, he rules over the woody Samrochana hill near the Gomati river. He, whose long tail is covered with beautiful, long hairs he is heroic Chanda, he wants to reduce himself everything to ruins he who has long yellow locks and is looking with burning eyes towards Lanka and who always lives in the Vindhya mountain, in the Krishna, the Sahya, and in the Sudarshana hill, is the leader of army, named Samrambha. Look Thirty millions of formidable Vanaras have followed him for the destruction of Lanka. He who is thoroughly impartial amongst his troops and who is absolutely fearless and who in his anger casting a crooked look at Lanka is warlike Sharabha. Look! How he is brandishing his tail! He resides in the beautiful Saleya mountain Forty laks of commanders named Vihara are at his command. That stalwart hero

1 Perhaps the country abounded with Sandal woods.

towering over the Vanaras, like Indra amongst the Gods, and whose heroic roars are heard like the sounds of a trumpet is Panasa.¹ His place of residence is the Parijata mountain. Forty lakhs of commanders with their troops have gathered round him. He who is covering the sea beach with his vast host and is filled the air with noise like the second sea, is stalwart Vinata, tall as the Dardura mountain. This hero drink from the Vena's steam. He has sixty laks of troops. There stands heroic Krathan! He is challenging you for a fight. His commanders are strong and warlike, and every one of them has his own troops. He, who in pride of his prowess, does not take anybody into consideration is Gavaya. He is angrily advancing towards you. Seventy lakhs commanders are under him. O Rakshasa king! There is no limit to the number of these commanders. They are highly powerful and formidable. I shall mention to you the commanders and the leaders who are ready to display their utmost valour for Ram. The hero whose tail covered with fine hair, like the sun with rays and that which occasionally touches the ground

1 In the original occurs a simile with reference to, Panasa "as a cloud over casts the sky."

It is difficult to be faithful to every word or expression of the original, there are many disjointed expressions, evidently coming from different hands, moreover there are repetitions of one and the same thing again and again, which I have avoided as far as possible. I don't mean any disrespect towards the Ramayan, and I have stated my views in my Introduction. I (Vide pages from X IXI) shall be extremely sorry if any body thinks it profane some of the readers for their orthodox faith may take exception to one or two of my footnotes. "But Men of our time, to speak in Macaulay's language "cannot be perverted or converted by quartos." And in the present century every one is entitled to have his own views I have not however perverted the text by translating it according to my personal view, but where necessary I have expressed my views in the footnote. Now take a simple instance, the number of the Vanara troops spoken in this chapter is quite fabulous and it requires a great deal of credulity and a robust orthodoxy to take them to be literally true, but we believe it is but an instance of poetical hyperbole, a common feature of the ancient sanskrit poetry. May we be excused for such liberty of expressions. (Translator).

is named Hara, millions of captains are ready to pounce upon Lanka at his command with up-rooted trees. Those warriors who look like a bank of dark clouds are the formidable Bhallukas they are innumerable like sands on the shore of the sea. it is difficult to form a correct estimate of their prowess and valour. They live in tracts abounding in hills and rivers, Jamvuvan is their leader, this hero is quite dreadful to look at, as the God Parjanyan and remains surrounded by the clouds so he is ever surrounded by the Bhallukas. Jamvuvan lives in the Rikshyavan mountain and drinks from the stream of the Narmada. The name of his elder brother is Dhumra, in appearance he is after him, but in prowess he is superior to him. He is gentle, and submissive to his superior and heroic. This wise leader helped Indra greatly in the war between the Devasana and the Asuras and received his desired boon. His troops are countless climbing the hills they hurl huge stones as clouds. Those troops have absolutely no fear of death. In cruelty they are like the Rakshasas and the Pishachas and their bodies are covered with hairs. The warrior who is sometimes bounding from the ground is named Rambha. He who always lives near God Indra and whose troops are innumerable, is named Sannadan. He is the grandsire of the Vanaras. He touches the peaks by his flanks, and when he stands he is a Yoyana tall. Amongst the quadrupeds there is none so beautiful like him. Formerly there was a fierce fight between him and Indra, the king of the Gods, but he came out unbeaten. Look there stands Kranthan, he was begotten by Agni in the womb of a Gandharva woman to help the Gods in the war between the Gods and the Asuras. In prowess, he is like Indra, he resides in the Kailasa mountain, where Kuvera enjoys black berries, and which is worshipped by the Kinnaras and is king of the mountains. He is attendant of your brother Kuver. He is the leader of million Vanaras and wishes to destroy Lanka alone. There stands heroic Pramatha, who roams on the bank of the Ganges,

by frightening the elephants thinking of the former enmity between the monkeys and the elephants. He lives in cave and is leader of the Vanaras. He breaks down trees into pieces and obstructs the passage of the wild elephants. This great hero lives in a part of the Mandara hill named Ushirvija. Millions of Vanaras follow him and they are all invincible. That is Pramatha who looks like a cloud roaring in wrath. There stands Gavaksha he is the king of the Golangulas. He has rendered great help in the construction of the bridge. Formidable white mouthed Golangulas have surrounded him for the destruction of Lanka. There stands the great hero, Keshari. This great leader of the Vanaras lives in the beautiful Sumeru mountain, where plenty of flowers blossom, where the bees ever fly from flower to flower, round which the sun ever revolves whose rays crimson the animas and birds where there is plenty of honey, and whose peaks are never left by the saints. That hero is Shatavali. He lives in the Savarni Meru that stands in the midst of the sixty thousand golden hills. A vast number of white and yellow Vanaras have followed him. They have formidable teeth like lions and quite irresistible like tigers. These Vanaras are fiery like fire and dreadful like venomous snakes, their tails are unduly long and bodies are huge like rocks. They roam like infuriated elephants their voice is deep like the rumbling of the clouds, their eyes are round and their colour is yellow. They are, as if, reducing Lanka to ashes. Shatavali is the leader of these Vanaras. For victory he worships the sun. He is quite confident about his valour. He has staked his life for the attainment of Ram's object. Besides these great warriors, there are Gavaksha, Gavaya, Nala, Neela, Gaja and others and each one of them has been followed by ten Kotis of Vanaras troops. Besides them there are many warriors residing in Vindhya hill, it is difficult to ascertain their number. They are huge like mountains and can within an instant reduce the world into atoms and dusts.

The Shuka said, "Oh king! The warriors whom you see seated in the front, who are tall like the mountain-pines and strong like infuriated elephants are the followers of Sugriva, the kapi-king. They are the residents of Kishkindhya. These Vanaras are quite formidable like the Giants and Danavas and can assume any shape or form at their will. They fight with god-like valour in the field of battle. They are millions in number and are born of the Gods and the Gandharvas. That two God-like Vanaras are Majinda and Dvidida, none is their match in strength and valour. They partook of nectar at the bidding of Brahma. They think of reducing Lanka into ruins themselves alone. The great hero that stands there like an infuriated elephant is Hanuman, the son of the wind god, he can even smother the ocean by his ire. He came to Lanka to gather information about Janaki. He is beautiful and strong and can assume any form at his will. When he was a young boy he once wished to devour the newly risen sun being tempted by its red colour. "I shall catch the sun by crossing three thousand Yoyanas, since my hunger is not appeased by earthly fruits." Thus thinking he bounded up in the sky. But the sun is beyond the reach of the Rakshasas and the holy saints, and being unable to catch the sun he fell upon the Udaya mountain. His cheek bone is very strong, but having fallen from such a height upon the hard rock, one of his cheek bones has been broken, since then he is known as Hanuman. He is the eldest son of Keshari and is quick like the wind. I know his history. It is impossible to describe his valour or beauty. He set fire to Lanka. Why the king does not recognise him? This hero can also reduce Lanka to ruins.

By the side of Hanuman behold that lotus-eyed hero of green hue that is Ram. He is Arirath¹

1 Atiratha means a great hero, perhaps the greatest. On the eve of the battle of Karukshetra, the great hero Bhishma classified the generals as Maharathi, Atidharathi etc. Atirathi etymologically means who alone can fight against desperate odds.

amongst the Ikshwakus. His valour is well known. He never violates the dictates of religion, and he is foremost amongst those who are versed in the Vedas. He is master of Brahma-weapons. His shafts can pierce through the three worlds, the heaven, earth and the nether region. His wrath is like that of the God of death and his might like that of Indra. You have abducted his wife from Janasthan and he has come here for battle. That hero seated at his right, whose colour is like that of varnished gold, whose chest is spacious, eyes beautiful and looks curly and of deep blue hue is Lakshman. He is engaged for doing good to his elder brother. He is skilled in polity and war. He is the foremost of the heroes, formidable and victorious. He is the right hand of Ram, as if his other self. He has staked his life for Ram. This hero alone can destroy the Rakhasa race. He who is seated to the left of Ram, surrounded by a few Rakshasa followers, is Vibhishan. Ram has invested him with the kingship of Lanka. He has come to fight against you out of wrath. And whom you behold like a mountain, amongst the Vanaras is Sugriva, the king of the vanaras. Like the Himalayas amongst mountains, he is foremost amongst the Vanaras in birth, rank, spirit, valour and fame. Impregnable Kishkindhya is his place of residence. In that hilly pass he lives with good many leaders of army. On his neck hangs a golden necklace with hundred lotuses. That necklace is coveted by gods and man, and the Goddess of wealth is there. Ram after slaying Vali has conferred that necklace the Vanara kingdom and queen Tara on Sugriva. O king! Hundred¹ Lakhs make one Koti. One lakh kotis make one Sankha, one lakh Sankha, make one Maha Sankha, one lakh Maha-sankhas make one Vrinda, one Lakh Vrindas make one Mahavrinda, one lakh Maha Vrindas make one Padma, one lakh Padmas make one Mahapadmas one lakh Manapadmas make one Kharva, one lakh Kharvas make one Samudra, one lakh Samudra make, one

1 One lakh, one hundred thousand 100,000.

Mahogha. Heroic Sugriva with thousand Kotis, hundred Vrindas, thousand Mrhavrindas, hundred Sannkhas thousand Mahavrindas, hundred Padmas, thousand Mahapadmas, hundred Samudras, and thousand Mahogha Vanaras. with heroic Vibhishan and counsellors has come for battle. The Vanara army are like burning planets, just watch them and be careful about victory.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RAVAN SENDS OTHER SPIES.

Ravan, on the instructions of Shuka, looked at the Vanara leaders, heroic Lakshman, Vibhishana, Sugriva. Angada, Hanuman, Jamvuvan, Sushena, Kumuda, Neela, Nala, Gaya, Gavaksha, Sharabha, Mainda, Dvidida, and grew anxious. Great anger smothered his breast. He began to rebuke Shuka and Saran and they stood with down-cast looks, Ravan then addressing them said, "It is not proper for any servant or dependent to speak anything unpleasant when his master is in trouble or in a state of fear. You have not learnt the true import of policy, in vain you did serve your superiors and the aged ones, or it might be that once you learnt the true meaning of it but you have forgotten it now. You are simply carrying the load of ignorance. It is my misfortune that I am surrounded by such counsellors. I am myself the ruler and good and evil of others depend upon my words. Aren't you afraid of your lives, since you are saying all these things to me? A forest tree may not be consumed by forestfire, but there is no escape of the guilty from the wrath of the king. You are praising the enemy and I forgive you at the recollection of your past services. So be off."

Then Shuka and Saran went out in shame, wishing victory to Ravan.

Ravan then asked Mahodara to summon some trust-worthy spies. Mahodara sent for them at the command of the king and they soon appeared before Ravan with folded palms. They are cool and fearless.

Ravan addressing them said, "Go and watch actions of Ram. Get information about the friends of Ram, who out of their love have come with him. Carefully ascertain how Ram sleeps, how he gets up and what he will do to-day."

Then those spies set out with Shardula as their head. Secretly they found out Ram, and Lakshman. Vibbishan detected them and captured them easily. Shardula was highly vicious and wicked Vibbishan handed over him alone to Ram. The Vanaras began to beat him. Virtuos Ram released him out of pity. The spies panting from thrashing returned to Ravan told him everything in details. Then Ravan, having learnt that Ram had at last arrived became anxious and said to Shardula. "Your face has grown pale, tell me, had you been a victim to the enemy's wrath?"

Thereupon panick-stricken Shardula replied, "O king! The Vanaras are quite formidable and Ram himself is their protector so it is difficult together any information through the spies. We cannot even speak to them, how can we question them? As I wai about to ascertain secrets of the army the Rakshasa detected me, they dragged me out by showering upon me fist, kicks and blows. They took me before Ram. I was than bleeding from the beatings of the Vanaras and I entreated them with floded palms to desist. Ram, at this stage suddenly espied me and at once cried out "Ah! Ah! What are you doing?" Thus saying he rescued me from the hands of the Vanaras. That hero having filled the sea with stones and hills has arrived with his army at the gates of Lanka. He is advancing towards Lanka by forming Garura Vuha.¹ He will

1 A particular form of drawing the army in battle array. It means (in the original) that Ram draw up his forces in the form of a bird (eagle). It might be that it was something like the modern Banking movement.

soon reach the ramparts, so either return Sita or be prepared for fighting."

Hearing these words the Rakshasa King, Ravana, had in his mind revolved a hundred things and asked, "you have yourself seen the army now tell me who is related to whom? I shall decide my course of action after ascertaining their strength. Those who want to fight ought to discuss these things."

Then Shardula said, "O king! Sugriva is the son of Riksha king, Jamvuvan is the son of Gadgada another son of Gadgada is Dhumra, Keshari is the son of Vrishasti and Hanuman is son of Vayu begotten, in Keshari's wife. This hero came and fought against the Rakshasas in Lanka. Sushena is the son of Dharma; Dadhimuka is the son of swift Brahma he is like Death incarnate in the form of Vanara. Commander-in-chief Neela is the son of Agni, mighty prince Angada is the grandson of Indra. Mainda and Divrvida are the sons of Aswini. Gaya, Gavaksha, Gavaya Sharabha and Gandhamadan are the five sons of Death (Yama) the rest ten Kotis of Vanaras are the offsprings of the gods it is not easy to trace their genealogy. He who has slain Khara and Dushans that Ram is the son of king Dasharath. There is not a greater hero than he. It is he who slew Virdha and Kavandha. His accomplishments are manifold. He by his prowess destroyed all the Rakshasas of Janasthan. Lakshman is like a tusker amongst the herd of wild elephants, even Indra cannot escape his arrows. Sweta and Jyotirmukha are the sons of Surjya, Hemkuta is the son of Varuna, Nala is the son of Viswakarma and Dudhara the son of Vasu. Your brother Vibhishan is the foremost of the Rakshasas, he is engaged in the welfare of Ram and has invaded Lanka. O king! I have stated everything. They are now halting in the Suvela mountain. Now, you are to decide what course of action is to be adopted."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ILLUSION.

At this, Ravan grew extremely anxious and he summoned his counsellors. A deep consultation was held. After discussing with his ministers, Ravan entered his palace. Then he called a sorcerer named Vidyujjibha. He asked Vidyujjibha to create by magic the head and bow of Ram, and he would delude Janaki with that.

Thereupon, Bidyujjibha at once produced a magic head. Ravan was exceedingly pleased at that sight he rewarded Vidyujjibha with ornaments and gold and he went with it to meet Janaki in the Asoka forest. On arriving there he found Janaki seated on the ground and with pale and down cast look was thinking of Ram. Grim Rakshasis were trying to console her.

Ravan approached and haughtily broke forth in glee, "O Janaki! I have been humouring you in every possible way, but for whom you are slighting my advances of love that Ram has been slain in battle. I have humbled your pride, I have outrooted your pillar of support, so be my wife for there is no other alternative. Ah, my silly girl! Give up your attachment for Ram. What will you gain by thinking of him? He is dead. Be thou mistress over my queens. You are of little virtue and in vain do you brag of your intelligence. You are hopeless. Now listen to the tale of the destruction of your husband like that of the formidable Vritrashura."

Ram, for my destruction, arrived at the sea shore, with the Vanara troops mobilised by Sugriva. After the sunset he encamped his army on the northern side of the sea-beach. It was midnight everyone was happily asleep from exhaustion. In the mean time some of my spies entered into the enemy's camp. Then the Rakshasa army led by Prahastha destroyed the army close to Ram

and Lakshman. They destroyed the troops with Pattisha, Parigha. Chakre, Rishthi, Danda, Kutamudgara, Tomara, Prasa, dushala. At that time Ram was deep buried in sleep and in quick hand cut his head with a stroke of his sword. Vibhishan was running away, but he has been captured by force. Lakshman has disappeared with the Vanara hosts. Sugriva's neck has been broken Hanuman's cheek has been shattered and he has met with death at the hands of the Rakshasas. Jamvuvan was about to rise, but he has been cut into pieces just like a log of wood when Minda and Dvidida were gasping and crying in blood-stained bodies they cut down. Panasa¹ is even rolling in dusts like the fruit of that name. Dadhimukha has been cut down by Naracha and is lying in the cave. Kumud has silently been laid low by arrows, and Angada after vomiting blood is lying prostrate. The Vanara hosts being trampled by elephants and chariots have scattered like clouds. Some of them have run away being sticken with fear, and some of them are about to die. As the lion chases the elephants' herds, the Rakhasa pursued the Vanaras. At that some so fell into the sea, some hid themselves in the sky and some of the Vanaras along with the Bhallukas climbed the trees. The Rakshasas have destroyed all the Vanaras in the forest in the hills, and on the sea-beach your husband, Ram, with his army has been destroyed by the Rakhasa hosts."

With these words Ravan said to a Rakhasi, "Call that formidable Vidyujjibha, that hero will fetch Ram's head from the field of battle."

Then Vidyujjibha came with the magic head and the bow and stood before Ravan with folded palms. Then Ravan said, "Vidyujjibha place Ram's head before Janaki, so that she may see with her own eyes, may witness the miserable plight of her husband."

Vidyujjibha throwing the beautiful head of Ram before Janaki hurried off from that place. Ravan too

threw down the shining bow saying. "This is Ram's head. Heroic prahastha! after slaying human Ram at night has brought this bow and quiver of ; Ram be my wife."

CHAPTE RXX.

THE LAMENTATIONS OF JANAKI.

Janaki with her own eyes saw Ram's head and his bow. She also remembered Hanuman's words, that Sugriva had joined Ram for war. It was Ram's colour his face, his hair, his bow, his eyes. and his diadem of the head! She examined the head carefully. She was overwhelmed with sorrow and began to abuse Kaikeyi saying, "Kaikeyi! Your intentions have now been fulfilled, the heir of the Ikshwaku line has been destroyed. You are quarrelsome therefore your line has come to end. You sent Ram along with me in rags Tell me what wrong did he inflict on you?" Then Janaki fell trembling on the ground and became senseless and after regaining her consciousness. She began to lament "Alas! I am ruined O hero! What a wretched plight I have been reduced to. Alas! I have become a widow. What worse condition might befall a woman than widowhood? That widowhood has fallen to my lot. You were of good character and I was devoted to you, but you have died before me! I am plunged into a ocean of grief, but alas who would have rescued me is dead. Worshipful Kausalya is too much devoted to her son. Astrologers used to say that you were to live long, but now I find their words to be false, you are so short-lived. You were intelligent, but did your intelligence forsake you? Perhaps, it is due to evil moment. Time brings with it the consequence of our acts. You were versed in polity, it is you knew how to avoid danger. still. I know not how could you die so untimely? Perhaps I am myself fatal night (death) that has brought about your destruc-

tion and my forced endurance. I am quite innocent, but you have embraced the earth by discarding me? I used to worship your gold plated bow everyday with sandal paste and flowers, but what an end it has met with! You have certainly become united with your father, Dasarath and your forefathers in heaven. It is a great Virtue to fulfil the pledge of one's father, and surely for that meritorious act, you have been transformed into a star in the firmament. You are virtuous, but you shouldn't have discarded your own family. O Royal master! I am your wife, but why are you not looking at me or speaking to me? At the time of marriage, you took the vow that you would perform all religious rites with me, just remember that and take this poor soul with you. I know not for what offence of mine you have repaired to the next world. Alas! The auspiciously decorated body that I was wont to embrace, is surely now being torn by dogs and jackals. You had performed with great pomp Agnishtoma and other sacrifices then why your body was not burned by sacrificial fire? Now, afflicted Kausalya will find only Lakshman out of the three of exiled. On her asking, Lashman will surely tell of destruction of Vanara hosts in hands of the Rakshasas at night. Alas! Her heart will surely be broken hearing of your destruction and my confinement amongst the Rakshasas. I am extremely unholy it is for me that stainless hero, Ram, after crossing the ocean has been drowned in a ditch. He married me through infatuation. I am a stain to my race. I am death in the form of his wife. Perhaps, I did not give anything in charity in my prior birth, therefore I am lamenting even being the wife of hospitable Ram. Ravan! Take me immediately to my dead husband and slay me over his corpse.

Just do a piece of good work by uniting the wife with her husband. Let my body be united with his. I shall follow him."¹

¹ This does not allude to the "Satee" rite which was at once a glory and a disgrace of Indian history. There is no reference on this

Thus, large-eyed Janaki began to lament bitterly at the sight of the severed head of Ram. In the meantime the gate-keeper went near Ravan and after wishing him victory said with folded palms. "O royal Sir !

General Prahastha with the councillors is waiting for you. I have been sent by him. Though I have come in an inopportune moment, but still you will be pleased to forgive me, as a king. There is some pressing business, kindly grant them an interview."

Thereupon, Ravan left the Asoka forest and without any loss of time appeared in the Assembly hall and held consultation with his ministers.. And as soon as Ravan was gone, that magic head and the bow vanished in a moment.

Ravan after consultation asked his commanders to mobilise the troops by the call of trumpets, but not to disclose the real cause of their mobilisation.

Thereupon, the royal messenger, mobilised the troops and informed Ravan of their arrival.

CHAPTER XXI

SITA AND SARAMA

Sarama, the Rakshasa lady, was a dear friend of Janaki. She found Janaki rolling in the dust, she was senseless with grief at the news of her husband's death. Janaki was under the spell of the Rakshasi magic. Sarama pitied at her wretched condition, raised her with affection, and consoling her said, "O Janaki ! I have heard everything by remaining concealed in the forest. I have also ascertained the cause of his hurried retreat by going out myself. You see, Ram has neither vice or indolence, nor he is too much addicted to sleep. The talk of fight during sleep is all false and it is not possible to slay Ram. As the gods are protected by Indra so the

horrible rite in the Ramayan, but on the contrary we find instances of widow remarriage.

Vanaras are protected by Ram. It is impossible to kill them by weapons, or stones his might is inconceivable and he is versed in polity. That victorious hero has not been slain. Haughty Ravan is given to evil deeds and is eneimical to all living beings. That sorcerer has deluded by his magic. Now, all your sorrows will be over and your good luck is about to dawn. Let me give you a piece of good news, heroic Ram with Lakshman and the Vanara troops, has crossed the ocean and has encamped on the southern beach of the sea. His object been secured and he is defended by his own valour, The Vanara hosts are guarding him Just now Ravan sent emissaries there and they have brought the news of Ram's arrival. Ravan, at this news has been consulting with his counsellors.

In the meantime, the deep roar of the army along with loud trumpet notes was heard. Then Sarama began to speak with sweet words. "Listen to the deep trumpet call, like the rumbling of distant clouds, summoning the troops for battle. Preparation for fight is going on. The elephants have been ready and horses have been yoked to the chariots. Look, there the cavalry is galloping with lances in their hands. As swift floods fall with thundering sound to the sea so the wonderful Rakshasa army is flooding through all highways and thoroughfares. As in summer the forest fire appears to shine in various hues so the various arms of the Rakshasas, shields and armours are glittering in various kinds of glare. The fourfold forces are ready for the war and are extremely restive. Just listen to the gong of the bells, the neighing of the horses, the rumbling sound of the chariot wheels, and to the loud noise of the army. O Janaki! Your fate has been propitiated and she is now favourable to you. Great panic has seized the Rakshasas. O lotus-eyed beauty! Ram's prowess and valour can never be described. As victorious Indra was united with Upendra so Ram has become united with his brother Lakshman. When he will come here by conquering the enemies then I shall see you on his lap shedding tears of joy on his ample breast clasped

in a deep embrace and your desire fulfilled. You have been wearing this single braid of hair reaching up to your thighs, but he will soon untie it. His countenance is beautiful like the rising full moon and you will shed big tears of joy at its sight. O Sister ! Ram will shortly be happy by your union, and you too will be happy with the loving caresses of Ram like the green earth smiling with corns due to rains."

"O worshipful lady ! Just pray to him who revolves round the Sumeru hill like a horse, the sun, who is the sole remover of all sufferings and sorrows of the created beings."¹ As the clouds gladden the sun-burnt earth by pouring delightful rains, so Sarama revived grief-stricken Janaki with her sweet words, and for rendering good services in opportune moments Sarama smilingly said, "My sister ! I may secretly go and inform Ram about your welfare and come back without being detected. When I shall soar along the unsupported sky then even the eagle won't be able to overtake me."

Then Janaki being somewhat assured told Sarama in sweet and gentle words. "Surely my sister, you can roam along the sky and earth as you list, but let me tell you what is proper for me. Listen to me, if you really wish me good, and if you are anxious to do me some service, then go and please ascertain what Ravan is doing. That villain is cruel and deeply skilled in dark magic, His magic has indeed stupefied me like wine. These grim Rakshasis are ever threatening and scolding me. I have grown extremely anxious and sad in mind. Now go and find out if Ravan speaks anything in favour of my release, and this shall I consider as the greatest favour done to me."

Thus saying Janaki began to cry. Then Sarama wiped off the tears by the end of her cloth, and in gentle words said, "If you so desire, I shall immediately go to Ravan and come back soon with the news."

¹ The sun at the centre of the solar system is not only the source of light, but according to science, is the source of life, thus along with it, of all joys.

Then Sarama in disguise appeared before Ravan. That villain was then holding 'consultation with his counsellors, and she heard everything. Having ascertained the real state of things she returned to the Asoka forest, and found Janaki like the Goddess of beauty' shorn of her lotus-seat. She was waiting for her. Janaki on seeing Sarama returned embraced her affectionately and said with a trembling voice, "Dear Sister! Take your seat, tell me everything about the intentions of cruel Ravan."

Thereupon, Sarama replied, "My sister! I found the royal mother and the counsellors inducing Ravan in various ways to return you with honour to Ram. The dowager queen said, "My boy! Return Sita to Ram. The wonderful feat he has done in Janasthan is enough warning for you. The crossing of the ocean by Hanuman, his meeting with Janaki and the destruction of the Rakshasas are wonderful. Which man or Vanara can accomplish such a wonderful feat? Many are thus persuading Ravan but as the miser is ever unwilling to part with his money so he is most reluctant to give you up. He will never surrender you unless he is killed in battle. He has thus resolved and in truth such a decision is meant for his death. Unless he is destroyed with all his family, he will not give you up simply out of fear. Ram will surely return with you to Ayodhya after compassing his destruction."

While Saroma and Janaki were talking thus deep trumpet notes were heard. The followers of Ravan got dispirited at the heroic roars of the Vanara troops.

CHAPTER XXII.

MALAYAVAN'S SPEECH.

In the meantime, Ram advanced towards Lanka by resounding the quarters by loud trumpets and conch-

1 Lakshmi means wealth, beauty and splendour.

shells. Hearing those trumpet notes cruel Ravan, the oppressor of the world, thought for a moment then addressing his counsellors said, "I have heard all what you have said about Ram. But I know you to be great heroes and I can't understand why you have thus lapsed into silence by thinking of Ram's prowess."

Then his maternal uncle, wise Malayavan said, "O king! The king who is versed in fourteen kinds of knowledge and who acts in conformity to law and customs attains prosperity and he is feared by his enemies. He alone thrives who concludes peace and declares war in opportune moments and who ever anxious to increase his resources. If the king be weaker than his enemy or even equal to him then peace should be concluded, but should fight when he is stronger than his foes. It is in no way advisable to slight one's enemy O king! Go and conclude peace with Ram return Janaki for whom he has declared war. The Gandharvas and holy saints pray for his victory you should make peace with Ram. You see, God, Brahma the Grand Sire of creation has created two things for the Gods and the Asuras that is virtue and vice. Virtue is on the side of the noble Gods and vice on the side of the Asuras. When the age of truth arrives then virtue triumphs over vice, but in the age of Sin, vice over virtue. O king! In the course of your career through the worlds you have trampled upon virtue, that is why the enemy is more powerful than you. Now, vice like a dreadful python is going to devour the Rakshasas while virtue is strengthening their side. You are too addicted to worldly things and unruly, and once you tyrannised over the holy saints greatly. They are virtuous and are devoted to religious penance their prowess is unbearable like blazing fire. The Rakshasas fled away like clouds scattered by the summerwind when they chant the Vedic Mantras and offer oblations duly to the sacrificial fire. The smoke rising from the sacrifices performed by the fire-like Rishis, when worshipping the God of fire, robs the Rakshasas of their strength and envelopes them in darkness. The severe

acts of religious penance that are performed by them in the famous places of pilgrimage, are now scalding the Rakashasas. No doubt, on account of the blessings, of Brahma, you are invincible and indestructible by the Gods, Asuras and the Yakshas, but men, Vanaras and the Golangulas are of a different race. It is they who have been roaring gazing towards Lanka. Just look, evil portents are everywhere to be found. The clouds pour forth blood with deafening thunders, the sky is covered with dusts. Horses, cattle and other beasts of burden are shedding tears, jackals and other ravenous animals are entering the gardens of Lanka with fierce howls. The Mahakalas¹ appear in dreams and grin with their yellow teeth. Dogs steal away the offerings of worship. Asses are boon of cows, mouses of mongoose! Tigers are pairing with cats, dogs with swine, and the kinvaras and the Rakshasas with human beings. Yellow pigeons with red feet are fluttering about every where at the bidding of death. Tame domestic parots being attacked by wild pugnaceous birds drop dead from their cages. Birds and animals are crying gazing at the sun. Every evening a black burning hideous figure with shaven head is seen in every house! O king! such evil portents are thus to be found everywhere. Heroic Ram is no ordinary human being. He must be a wonderful being who has succeeded in building a bridge over the sea, perhaps he is Vishnu incarnate in human form. Go and conclude peace with him and decide your course of action after examining his achievements carefully."

Thus concluded Malyavan of excellent valour lapsed into silence after seeing something in Ravan's mind.

¹ Evil spirits, perhaps messengers (prognostications) of Death.

CHAPTER XXIII.

RAVAN'S ANGER.

Ravan, whose doom was at hand, could not bear these well-meaning words of Malyavan. He frowned at him and rolling his eyes in anger said. "I have never heard such hard expressions which you have just now uttered for my supposed welfare, thinking my enemy as a formidable one. Why do you consider him to be much formidable who is an ordinary being who has been disinherited by his father, who has been exiled into forest, and whose retinue consists of the wild Vanaras ! And why do you consider him, who is the lord of all the Rakshasas, so weak ? Perhaps, you are envious of me because I am a great hero, or it might be that you thus want to incite me to a fight ? There must be some deep reason for speaking in this way. Unless for the purpose of inciting me to a fight no prudent man will speak like this to his master. Janaki is like the Goddess of beauty shorn of her lotus, I have secured her from the forest, why should I return her simply from any fear of Ram "Ram will be destroyed within a few days along with Lakshana Sugriva. What has he to fear whom, even the Gods can not stand in battle ? I shall rather break into two, but shall never bend. This is my nature and it is not possible to overcome that nature. Though Ram has succeeded in building a bridge over the sea, but that is a pure accident and there is nothing to wonder at. Ram has reached Lanka with his hosts, but I shall never desist so long there is life in me."

At this, Malyavan greatly ashamed left the place with his permission.

After this Ravan after consulting with his counsellors made arrangements for the defence of the city. He posted heroic Prabastha at the Eastern gate, Maha-

parshwa and Mahodara at the Southern gate, wizard Indrajit at the Western gate, and then after directing Shuka and Saran for protecting the Northern gate, he at last decided to defend it himself. He then asked powerful Virupaksha to defend the centre of the city with a large number of troops.

Thus making arrangements for the defence of the city Ravan whose end was drawing nigh, felt himself much gratified.

Then when ministers repaired to their places after wishing victory to him and after dismissing every one he entered his rich spacious palace.

CHAPTER XXIV.

RAVAN'S ARMY.

In the meantime, Sugriva, Hanuman, Jamvuvan, Vibhishan, Angada, Lakshman, Sharabha, Savandu, Sushena, Mainda, Dvivida, Gaya, Gavaksha, Kumad, Nala, Panasa and others came near the enemy's line. They said amongst themselves. "There stands the city of Lanka, even the Asuras, Uragas and the Gandharvas can not assail it. Ravan himself resides in the city. Let us now decide our course of action."

Thereupon, Vibhishan spoke in chaste language "O heroes! A little before this I sent Anala, Panasa, Sampati and Pramiti to Lanka. They reconnoitred the movements of the enemy's army in the disguise of birds and have come back after seeing their arrangements made for the defence of the city. Ram! I shall now report to you what I have heard from them. Prahastha with a large army is defending the Eastern gate of the city. Mahaparshwa and Mahodara the Southern gate, and Indrajit the Western gate and a band of warriors

with various weapons are with him. Ravan himself is anxiously defending the Northern gate, and a large Rakshasa army is with him. Virupaksha with a body of of lancers is defending the centre. The enemy's army consists of ten thousand cavalry, hundred thousand elephants, and ten millions infantry.¹ They are exceedingly powerful and formidable, and Ravan is proud of them. In times of war, each of the Rakshasa leader becomes surrounded by millions of Rakshasas."

Thus saying, Vibhishan pointed out the four ministers.

Vibhishan resumed for the edification of Ram. "O Ram! When Ravan went to fight against Kuvera, sixty lakhs of Rakshasas went with him. In valour and prowess, they are mighty! Don't be frightened by this report. I want you to rise to the occasion. You can even subdue the Gods by your own valour. Draw up your army in battle array and slay Ravan in battle."

Thereupon, Ram being resolved for the destruction of the enemy directed. "Let heroic Nala with a large number of troops challenge Prahastha at the Eastern gate. Let Vali's son, Angada, attack Mahaparshwa and Mahodara at the Southern gate, Let Hanuman force his passage through the western gate. I shall myself with Lakshman besiege the Northern gate since Ravan is there and I am resolved to remove that tyrant from this world. Let Sugriva, Jamvuvan and Vibhishan attack the centre. Let this also be understood that no Vanara should assume the form of a human being; we two brothers, friend Vibhishan and these four counsellors will remain in human forms."

Intelligent Ram having made such arrangements for success, came out to ascend at the top of the beautiful Suvela hill, and the vast Vanara army advanced towards Lanka.

Thereafter, Ram addressing Sugriva and wise Vibhi-

¹ In the original the above numbers indicate the number of the Generals i. e. ten thousand cavalry Generals.

shan said, "Let us now ascend the Suvela hill, We shall pass our night here. Let us reconnoitre, from this place, the city of Ravan, who for his death has carried off my wife and who never cares for religion or morality."

Thus saying, Ram ascended the Suvela hill, heroic Lakshman Sugriva and Vibhishan with his counsellors followed him with bow in hands. On getting over the Suvela hill, Ram found the city of Lanka, as if built on the air. It was encircled by an excellent wall with huge gates and the formidable black-skinned Rakshasas were defending the wall.

In the meantime, the sun went down reddening the western sky with its crimson rays and slowly the moon rose in the east. Vibhishan then greeted Ram with affection. Ram with Lakshman being surrounded by the leaders took rest on the summit of the Suvela hill during the night.

CHAPTER XXV.

SUGRIVA'S DARING.

Next day, the army leaders went to see the gardens, parks and forests of Lanka, they were all spacious, beautiful and full of peaceful calm. The Vanaras were greatly surprised at that range of trees with soft coppery and bunches of flowers that stood at various places entwined with beautiful creepers. The green woods with sweet scented flowers and fruits appeared most agreeable to the sight. It was beautiful like the heavenly garden of Nandan and the Caitravrattha forest of the Gandharvas. Five springs gushed at various points and all the splendour of the seasons seemed to be present there. Throatful music of many sweet singing birds, like the cuckoos were, being heard, the peacocks were dancing in the shade. The Vanaras in delight entered the woods and sweet breeze began to fan them with gentle breath.

After that, a number of generals entered Lanka at the instruction of Sugriva. The firm earth shook with their heroic treads, and beast and birds hid themselves in fear. There stood the Trikuta hill kissing the sky. It was covered with golden blossoms stretching hundred Yoyanas in length. Even birds, could not reach its summit. Upon that high hill stood the beautiful city of Lanka twenty Yoyanas in length and ten Yoyanas in breadth. Its great wall made of gold and silver and its high city-gates were quite impressive in their beauty. It was a city of palaces and lofty towers. There the palace of Ravan high as the Kailasha peak, stood on a thousand pillars, blazing with gold and gems. It was the ornament of Lanka and thousands of Rakshas were guarding it day and night. Ram was greatly astonished at the sight of that prosperous Lanka rich and beautiful like a heavenly city.

Ram, then, ascended the Suvela hill and cast his looks around and saw on the summit of the Trikuta mountain the magnificent city of Lanka, built by Viswakarma and found Ravan himself standing at the city gate.

On both sides of him were the insignia of royalty. He was being fanned with white chowris, a white umbrella was held over the head, he had red ornaments on his person and his breast bore the mark of a scar produced by the tusk of Airavata. He was dark like a blue cloud. His apparel was worked with gold, and his scarf was red like the blood of a hare. He looked like a cloud tinged by the evening rays of the sun.

In the meantime, Sugriva, at the sight of Ravan, stood up in great anger. His strength and courage doubled at this. He descended from the peak and in a bound arrived at the northern gate of Lanka and after looking hard at Rvan, spoke forth fearlessly. "O, Rakshasa! I am friend and humble servant of Ram, the lord of all. I am protected by his valour, you have no escape from my hands."

With these words Sugriva sprang upon Ravan.

threw down the magnificent crown from his head, and rushed against him.

Thereupon Ravan said, "In my absence you were possessor of a beautiful neck¹ but your neck immediately will be severed in my presence."

Saying this, Ravan stood up in anger, seized Sugriva forcibly and threw him down on the ground. Sugriva instantly bound up like a ball used in Kanduka² play, and threw down Ravan on the ground. Both of them began to perspire, both of them bled all over their bodies, both of them choked each other by their tight embrace both stood like the Salmate and the Kinsuka tree. One beat the other sometimes with fists, sometimes with slaps, and they repeatedly fell and rose up again. At last, both of them rolled on the ground. They stood up again they rolled into a ditch. They began to breathe heavily from exhaustion. They rested for a moment and reversed the fight. At times they siezed each other by their arms, sometimes they paced up and down from violent wrath. They fought each other like two elephants or like two lions. They began to drag each other by their arms and again they fell on the ground, and after rising from the ground they began to abuse each other and walked up and down in restlessness. Neither of the two felt exhausted or tired. The two warriors like two infuriated elephants attacked each other and warded off each one's attack with their arms like trunks one tried to finish the other, and one waited for the other as two angry cats sit facing each other over an article of food and one ready to spring over the other. They began to pace to and fro in various ways peculiar to wrestling.¹

1 Sugriva—means possessor of a Agriva—without a neck.

2 Kanduka—an ancient form of sport (which even the girls played) where a ball was thrown up and caught like a cricket ball. Nothing but ordinary wrestling.

1 Mandal, Vividhasthan, Gomutraka, Gati, Turyaka Gati, Vakragati, Warding, off, attacking, Abbidravan, Aplavan, Savigraha

Then Ravan tried to employ magic.² Victorious Sugriva understanding his motive sprang up in the sky. Ravan stood there being unable to follow Sugriva. Thus victory was gained by Sugriva, Sugriva thus exhausting Ravan returned to Ram with the velocity of wind. Ram's eagerness for battle increased. At that time, Sugriva was greeted by beasts, birds and by the trees.

CHAPTER XXVI,

RAM'S ADMONITION.

Then, Ram 'witnessing the signs of fighting all over the person of Sugriva, embraced him deeply and said, "My friend ! You made this daring dash without consulting me, but such dare devil acts are not worthy of a king. O hero ! You put myself, Vibhishan and the whole army in great anxiety. Please never do it again. You see, if any accident befall you, what will be the fate of my Janaki ? What shall I do with Bharat, Satrughna, Lakshman and even with my ownself ? O hero ! Though I am fully aware of your valour, but still I decided about my death in your absence. Now, after destroying Ravan with his family, I shall instal Bharat on the throne of Ayodhya and Vibhishan on the throne of Lanka, and then give up my body."

Thereupon, Sugriva replied, "My friend I am fully conscious of my own prowess, how could I then check myself at the sight of Ravan, the abductor of your wife ?"

Abaschan Paravritta. Apavritta, Apadruta, Avapluta, Upauynasha. Various strategic movements, incidental to wrestling have been mentioned in the original.

² Maya is not magic properly speaking, but something like hypnotism that produces illusion. It is also known as the Rakshasi Vidya.

Then, Ram after geeting Sugriva, told Lakshman, "My darling! Let us take shelter under the green woods abounding in fruits and flowers and wait there after drawing the army in battle array. Now, I find on all sides dreadful omens foreboding destruction of the lives of good many Vanaras, Bhallukas and Rakshasas. Look! How violently the wind is blowing there are repeated shocks of earth-quake and the hills are shaking and the clouds are raining blood. The evening is awe-inspring and horribly red, as if fire is being emitted from the sun, and inauspicious beasts and birds are howling, looking at the sun. The moon at night appears to be extremely wane and surrounded by a black-red circle, as is seen on the eve of universal destruction. The sun is marked with a blue stain and is girt by a long, narrow red circle. There has been a deviation in the motion of the planets and stars. Crows and vultures fall upon the ground. All these presage a dark calamity. Here the Jackals cry. The field of the battle will be strewn with the carcasses of the Vanaras and the Rakshasas and will be muddy with blood. Let us soon enter Lanka with our Vanara hosts."

Saying this, heroic Ram soon descended from the hill. He ordered the well-equipped Vanara army to set forth in an auspicious hour. And he followed them with a bow in his hand. Sugriva, Bibhishan, Hanuman, Jamvuvan, Neela and Lakshman followed his steps. They soon arrived at the gate of Lanka. Lanka was girt with a high wall. It was decorated with flags and furnished with high citygates. The city was inaccessible even to the Gods.

The Vanaras, at the command of Ram, led the attack against the city. Ravan was standing at the Northern gate like God Neptune in the midst of the sea! Ram and Lakshman attacked the Eastern gate. As the Demons guard the Nether regions, so formidable Rakshasas guarded the city. It was a terror to the weak.

General Neela with Mainda and Dvidida appeared before the Eastern gate. Heroic Angada with Rishabha, Gaja, Gavaya and Gavaksha appeared at the Southern gate; heroic Hanuman reached the Western gate; and Sugriva, Prajangha, Tarasha and other heroes attacked the centre. Thirty six millions of Vanaras arrived at where stood Sugriva, the king of the Kapis. Noble Vibhishan and Lakshman placed hundred thousands of Vanaras at each gate at the command of Ram. Sushena and Jamvuvan protected the rear of Ram by placing themselves behind a screen of trees. The Vanaras endowed with sharp teeth like that of tigers, got themselves ready for the fight with trees and stones. Their visages were grim and their tails were distended with rage. Many of them were stronger than hundreds of elephants put together. Their movements were wonderful. They appeared like locusts at the time of some great catastrophe of nature. Still the Vanaras were pouring in. The sky and the earth seemed to be covered by them. Thus the Vanaras surrounded the city of Lanka.

The Rakshasas were greatly astonished at the sight of those cloud like Vanaras. The noise of the Vanara army filled the sky, like the thundering sound with which a dam gives way before the rush of the sea. The city of Lanka shook with its hills and forests. The Vanaras were under the protection of Ram and Lakshman and were invincible even of the Gods.

Thereafter, Ram held consultation with his counsellors. He was not ignorant of the time-honoured canons of polity, as friendship, sowing dissensions amongst the enemy. He thought that his object could not be attained except by chastisement. Then Ram understanding the intentions of Vibhishan, addressing Angada said, "O noble one! Go to Ravan and communicate my words to the Rakshasa-king. Tell him, that we have safely crossed the sea and have besieged Lanka without any resistance and your doom is at hand. From your haughtiness you have so long oppressed the Gods, Yakshas, Rishis, Apsaras, Nagas, Gandharvas, and

the Rakshas, the pride of your getting boon from Brahma must be destroyed. Being smitten with the sorrow for losing my wife. I have encroached upon your door like Death. If you fight against me, you will attain the coveted end of the Gods, Maharshi, and the royal saints. Now, show your magic by which you abducted Janaki. If you donot seek my protection by returning Janaki to me. I shall destroy all the Rakshasas with my sharp arrows. Pious Vibhishan is my protegee, he will reign over Lanka without any thorns. You are vicious, only the fools are on your side, and you won't be able to enjoy wealth. If you fly over the three worlds in the form of a bird you will not escape from my hands. I am speaking what is good for you. Perform the rites which are meant for salvation in the next world. Your life is within my palm. Just look at Lanka to your heart's content, for soon you will cease to look upon it."

At these words, formidable Angada started along the sky like a burning flame. He soon appeared before Ravan and found him engaged with his counsellors. Angada got down from the sky and stood before him like a pillar of fire, and after introducing himself, he reported all what Ram had said in the presence of all. "O Rakshasa king !" Said he, "I am an envoy of Ram, the king of Ayodhya, and am the son of Vali, the kapi chief. My name is Angada. Perhaps I am not unknown to you. Heroic Ram has asked you to come out and fight with him and to prove yourself a man, and he will free the three worlds from all oppressions by destroying you with your friends and children. You are a source of trouble to the Rishis, and an enemy of the Gods. Yakshas, Rakshasas and the Gandharvas. Ram will send you to the ruins. If you do not return Janaki after bowing to his feet, Vibhishan will be the lord of wealthy Lanka."

When Angada said these hard words. Ravan repeatedly asked his counsellors to capture Angada and put him to death.

Thereupon, four formidable Rakshasas immediately siezed Angada. Heroic Angada, in order to display his prowess before the Rakshasas, did not offer any resistance to his arrest and he at once jumped upon the roof with those four Rakshasas, like four flies sticking to him. They being unable to bear that momentum of that spring, fell near Ravan. Angada then attacked the lofty tower and broke that into pieces, as formerly the thunder-bolt of Indra crushed the peak of the Himalayas. Angada then repeatedly sprang with heroic yells, giving out his name in pride. Thus by afflicting the Rakshasas and by gratifying the Vanaras, Angada came back to Ram.

Ravan was greatly enraged at the sight of his broken tower and heaved a deep sigh thinking that his doom was nigh.

In the meantime, Ram desirous of victory, got ready for the battle. Sushena, at the command of Sugriva, with the clever Vanaras—capable of assuming different forms at will—like the moon surrounded by the stars, began to patrol at different gates to pick up all sorts of informations from there. The Vanara army extended up to the beach of the sea. The Rakshasas were greatly surprised and panic-stricken at the sight of the innumerable Vanara hosts. They even found the Vanaras over the city-wall. Loud noise filled the air and the Rakshasas equipped with arms began to patrol hither and thither.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE GREAT SALLY.

The Rakshasas getting into Ravana's chamber said, "O king ! Ram has besieged Lanka with ease." Ravan was greatly enraged at this news and hearing that arrangements for guarding the city had been doubled, got upon his palace. Ravan grew extremely anxious.

at the sight of the vast Vanara army. For a long time he brooded over the matter and fixed his glance upon Ram and the Vanara hosts.

In the meantime, Ram gradually advanced towards Lanka with his army. He found Lanka well protected and casting his look upon the gay-looking city, he said within himself. "Alas! My gazelle-eyed Janaki is confined within its walls. She is lean with fasts and has made ground her bed." He was greatly pained with this thought and ordered for an immediate attack.

At soon as the signal for fight was given, the Vanaras filled all quarters with their heroic yells. Every one thought that he would be the first person to begin fight. Thinking this, the Vanaras stood up-rooting huge rocks and trees. At that time, Ravan getting upon the roof of his palace watched the manouvres of the Vanara army. Vanaras paid little heed to him and began to enter Lanka in great numbers, batch after batch. Those Vanaras of golden hue, with red faces, were resolved to do service to Ram. They proceeded with stones and trees in their hands and began to batter the city wall with them and even by their fist blows. The clear water of the ditches became soiled with weeds, reeds, dusts and logs of wood. They were formidable like infuriated elephants. They rent the sky with their shouts, "Victory to Ram Victory to Lakshman Victory to Sugriva."

Viravahu, Survahu, Anal and Panasa made a breach in the outer wall and waited at the spot. They pitched their camps in front of it. Warlike Kumud laid siege to the Eastern gate with ten thousand Vanaras. Heroic Panasa and Prasabha stood ready for their help. Swata-vali attacked the Southern gate with twenty Kotis of Vanaras and Tarapati and Sushena with millions of Vanaras invaded the Western gate, and Warlike Ram, Lakshman and Sugriva the Northern gate. Huge Golangula and formidable Gavaksha with millions of troops stood by Ram, and his other flank was protected by Dhumra with millions of fierce Bhallukas. Heroic

Vibhishan holding a mace in his hand, with his four counsellors came near Ram. Gaya, Gavaksha, Gavaya and Gandhamadan began to move hither and thither for the protection of the Vanara army.

Ravan was enraged at this and ordered his troops to get ready for the battle. As soon as they got that order a very great noise ensued. Thousands of conch shells blew out being filled with wind from the Rakshasas' mouth and everywhere yellow Bheris¹ like the moon, were being struck by golden sticks. The Rakshasas were bluish dark like the Shuka-birds² but with the white conch-shells attached to their mouths, they looked like banks of clouds with the cranes flying under them! Then they rushed out in great enthusiasm like the surging waters of the sea.

The Vanaras replied to that sound by their heroic yell. The earth and sky shook with trumpet notes and heroic roars, and the field of battle became resounded with the rumbling sound of the moving chariots, neighings of the horses and trumpets of the elephants. In the meantime, a fierce fight commenced between the two sides. The Rakshasas, displaying their great prowess began to strike the Vanaras with their flaming Gadas, sharp Shulas, Shaktis and Parashus. The huge-bodied Vanaras in their turn began to strike them with their nails, teeth, stones and logs of wood. "Victory to Sugriva" rose the constant shouts from the Vanaras and "Victory to Ravan" repeatedly shouted the Rakshasas. Each side displayed its valour. The Rakshasas were over the wall and Vanaras stood on the ground. The Rakshasas began to strike the Vanaras with Bhindipalas³ and Shulas. The Vanaras in fury sprang up began to drag them down. Severe struggle ensued between the parties, and field of battle became drenched with blood.

1 Bheri ordinarily means a trumpet, but trumpet is not struck but blown.

2 A kind of parrots, generally of green colour.

3 It is difficult, and in the most cases impossible, to identify these ancient weapons of war. So I have retained their original names.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE GREAT FIGHT.

Both sides became enraged at the sight of each other. The Rakshasas rushed forth in their horses decorated with gold, their elephants incapable of being looked at like tongues of fire and in chariots glittering like the sun. They were clad in beautiful armours and their deeds were quite thrilling. Each one of them prayed for Ravan's victory. The Vanaras rushed forward to meet them and a fierce fight ensued. As Andhakashura, in ancient times, fought against God Vyomkesha, so Indrajit fought against Angada; formidable Sampati battled against Prajangha; Hanuman against Jamvumali; highly enraged Vibhishan against Satrughna; heroic Gaja against Tapana; brave Neela against Nikumbha; Sugriva against Praghosa; Lakshman against Virupaksha Agniketu, Rashmikutu, Mitraghna and Jainakopa began to fight against Ram; Vajramusthi against Maitrinda; Ashaniprabha against Dvidida; formidable Praapan against Nala; and strong Sushena against Vidyumali. Blood flowed in stream from the bodies of both the Rakshasas and Vanara warriors—blood flowed like a stream, their hairs for its weeds and the bodies for the floating logs of wood. Heroic Indrajit in great wrath hurled a mace against Angada, as Indra hurls his thunder-bolt. Angada at once took up that mace and hurling it back against him, crushed his golden chariot with its horses and the charioteer. Prajangha pierced Sampati with three arrows. Heroic Aswakarna killed Prajangha. Jamvumali from his chariot hurled a shakti against Hanuman's heart. Hanuman in anger jumped on his chariot and with one slap he destroyed him with his chariot. Pratapan rushed towards Nala in great fury and pierced him with shafts by his quick hands. Nala at once plucked out his eyes and rendered

him useless. At that time, Sugriva killed warlike Praghasa by the blow of a Saptaparna tree who was about to swallow the Vanaras. Lakshman after smothering the grim-visaged Virupaksha with his arrows, laid him low with a single shaft. Agniketu, Rashmikutu, Shatrughna and Jainakopa were molesting Ram, but Ram with his flaming arrows cut off their heads. Vajramusthi was crushed by Mainda's beating. As the sun penetrates the clouds with his keen rays, so Nikumbha pierced Neela—dark as Collyrium dye. Discharging a volley of arrows by his quick hands, he began to laugh in derision. Neela cut off his head along with that of his charioteer, with the wheel of a chariot. Dvidida hurled a stone against Ashaniprabha and the latter too began to smite the former with his thunder-bolt like arrows. Dvidida being greatly enraged by it smote him with his chariot into atoms by a Sala tree. Vidyunmali set up heroic roars after piercing Sushena with his gold plated arrows. Sushena crushed his chariot into pieces by hurling a huge stone against it. As soon as the chariot was gone, Vidyunmali sprang on the ground with a mace in his hand. Sushena was greatly enraged at this and rushed towards him with a huge block of stone. In the meantime, Vidyunmali struck Sushena by mace on the breast. Sushena, being unruffled by that blow, silently hurled that stone against him. Vidyunmali at once dropped dead on the field of battle. Thus the Rakshasas were beaten by the Vanaras, as the Daityas were by the Gods in ancient times, they were thus worsted at each step. The battle field was soon covered with Bhallas. Gadas, Saktis, Tumaras, arrows, broken chariots and with the carcasses of the Rakshasa and Vanara soldiers. Dogs and Jackals were running about and tearing the limbs of the dead warriors.

The Rakshasas fainted¹ at the smell of blood and then renewed their fight in greater fury and waited for the advent of night.

¹ Possibly it means that the sight of so much blood flowing in streams upset the Rakshasas at first, but the Rakshasas were blood-thirsty, it is said!

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE NIGHT ATTACK.

At last, the sun went down and the fatal night came. Fierce fight ensued between the Vanaras and their born enemies, the Rakshasas. Intense darkness¹ enveloped every thing and one killed the other saying "you are a Vanara," or "you are a Rakshasa." Tremendous shouts like, "Kill him," "Tear him," "Pierce him," "Come on," "Why do you run away" filled the nocturnal air. The night was pitch dark, and the Rakshasas were blackskinned, but they, having worn golden armours, shone like hills' phosphorent herbs. The Rakshasas being overwhelmed with rage rushed towards the Vanaras and devoured them in their progress. The Vanaras too in anger sprang upon their golden chariots, yoked with horses decorated with gold tore off their banners and their snake-like flagstuffs with their sharp teeth. They began to bite the elephants with their riders and thus harassed the Rakshasas thoroughly. Ram, Lakshman too, with their snake-like shafts, destroyed a good number of the Rakshasas both visible and invisible. Dusts raised by the hoofs of the horses and chariot-wheels blinded the eyes of the warriors and filled the air—sounds of Bheri, Mridanga, Panava and of the conch shells, with the clatter of arms, rattling noise of the chariots neighing of the horses created a tremendous noise. Here and there lay scattered the corpses of the Vanaras and Rakshasas. The battle field was literally covered with dead bodies and various kinds of arms. Every part of the field was drenched with blood and became impassable. In fact, that night of slaughter was like the night of Destruction.

1 Thus it has been described in the Iliad that supernatural darkness once enveloped the field of Troy when neither friends nor foes could be distinguished, then Ajax prayed for light.

The Rakshasas advanced towards Ram discharging a volley of arrows and they set up repeated shouts of war. Their cries sounded like the deep rumbling of the clouds that rise at the time of the universal Destruction. Ram in quick hand discharged six flaming arrows against Jajnashatru, Mahaparshwa, Mahodara, Vajradansthra Shuka and Saran. They being penetrated through their armours, at once took to their heels. Ram lighted every quarter by his shafts. The Rakshasas that were before him were destroyed like moths in fire. His gold plated arrows were discharged in all directions and the dark night with their glitter appeared like an Autumnal night lighted with glow-worms! The night grew fearful with trumpet sounds and the yells of the Rakshasas. That tremendous uproar was echoed and re-echoed from the caves of the Trikuta hill. Dark, stalwart Golangulas began to devour the Rakshas.

Here, Indrajit was fighting against Angada. The chariot and horses and the charioteer of Indrajit were destroyed by Angada. With great difficulty Indrajit got down from the car and made good his escape. The Gods and the saints then greatly praised Angada for his heroic deeds. Ram and Lakshman too were immensely pleased. Every one was aware of Indrajit's prowess in battle, so every body was glad at his defeat. Sugriva, Vibhishan and other Vanaras repeatedly praised Angada for the deed.

Indrajit was greatly enraged at this defeat from Angada. He was proud on account of the boon he had received from Brahma and also for his magical powers of being invisible to others. He then began to smite Ram and Lakshman with his sharp arrows and struck them with Naga-weapons. He was a subtle warrior and he overwhelmed the two brothers in no time. It was almost impossible to vanquish them in an open fight, so he had recourse to magic to overwhelm the two brothers in the presence of other warriors.

Ram then asked Sushena, Neela, Angada, Sharabha, Dvividā, Hanuman. Saunprastha, Dishabha, Skanda and Kumed to find out Indrajit. These leaders were greatly delighted at this command of Ram, and uprooting huge trees they began to search for Indrajit in the sky. Indrajit began to stop those Vanaras in their courses by his heavenly arms. Those leaders of the army became deeply wounded by his Naracha weapons. Indrajit was hidden in darkness like the sun behind a bank of clouds. None could find him out.

Indrajit, in anger began to smother Ram and Lakshman incessantly with Naga weapons. The two heroes received injuries all over their bodies and they began to bleed from their wounds. They looked like two Kinsuka trees in blossoms. In the meantime, Indrajit, dark as Collyrium dye, and with eyes having red ends, rendering himself invisible said, to Ram and Lakshman. "You see, when at the time of fighting I render myself invisible then even Indra cannot find me out, not to speak of getting at me. I have already smitten you with my arrows, I shall now send you to Death."

With these words he pierced Ram and Lakshman with his arrows and began to roar in great delight. Ram and Lakshman were bound by Nag-pasha and they could not see anything. They were wounded all over their bodies and fell down like two flag-staffs of Indra. They were profusely bleeding from their wounds and there was hardly an inch of their bodies unhurt being struck on the heart first fell on the ground. The arrows of Indrajit were bright and transparent and covered the sky like dusts. Ram being struck with Naracha, Ardha Naracha, Bhalla, Anjalika, Vatsadanta, Sinha-danstra and Khura fell on the ground, the bed of the heroes, having throwing off his bow, being deprived of the bowstring. He could not even clutch his bow. At that sight, Lakshman despaired of life. Lakshman was over-whelmed with grief seeing Lotus-eyed Ram thus laying on the ground.

The Vanaras were greatly smitten with sorrow and began to shed tears by surrounding Ram on all sides.

CHAPTER XXX.

VICTORY OF INDRAJIT.

The Vanaras were greatly frightened at this. Ram and Lakshman were tied up in Nagpasha and Sugriva and Vibhishan arrived at the spot, after them came Neela, Divida, Mainda, Kumud, Sushena, Angada, and Hanuman. Ram and Lakshman were stricken with arrows, they were laying inert, bathed in blood, and their breath was gently blowing. The two great heroes lay prostrate like two golden staffs, and the captains shed tears surrounding their bodies. Vibhishan and Sugriva were greatly smitten with sorrow, the Vanaras repeatedly cast their glances towards the sky, but Indrajit remained hidden by his magic so the Vanaras could not find him out. Vibhishan was, however, conversant with magic and he could see Indrajit before him. Heroism of Indrajit was unparalleled in battle and none was a match for him.

Then spirited Indrajit seeing Ram and Lakshman lying on the ground, encouraging the Rakshas with pleasure, said, "You see, those who have destroyed Khara and Dushana have been slain by me. They will never be able to sunder the tie of the "Nag-pasha." Even if all the gods and the Asuras unite together they won't be able to liberate them from this bondage. On whose account, my father passed sad and anxious nights without even taking to his bed, and out of whose fear the people of Lanka were restless like a stream in the rainy season, I have removed that cause of all anxiety and fear. The prowess and valour have been rendered futile like the autumnal clouds."

With these words, Indrajit began to discharge his

arrows at the other Vanara leaders. He shot nine shafts against Nala and three against Mainda and three against Dvividā. He struck Jamvuvān with one arrow on the breast and Hanuman with ten arrows. After striking Gavaksha and Sharabha with two arrows each he began to hurl his shafts in great vehemence against the lord of Golongulas and Angada. The hero after somthing the Vanara heroes by his fiery arrows, set up such heroic roars that struck terror into the hearts of the Vanaras. He then addressing the Rakshasas with a triumphant laugh said, "O heroes! Just look at Ram and Lakshman, they are now laying senseless and inert."

The Rakshasas then roared in pride of Indrajit's heroic deeds. Seeing Ram and Lakshman laying listless on the ground, the Rakshasas took them to be dead, and repeatedly eulogised Indrajit for his valour. Indrajit thus rendering the Rakshasas happy and cheerful entered the city again.

Sugriva was greatly alarmed at the sight of numerous injuries on Ram and Lakshman. His eyes grew red with anger, and wet with tears in sorrow. Thereupon, Vibhishan said, "Sugriva! Don't be frightened. Wipe those tears, This is how fighting takes place. Victory is never attained at ease, nor on every occasion. Now, if our luck be auspicious, these two heroes will soon recover their consciousness. Be assured and I am too helpless just console me."

With those words, Vibhishan wiped off tears from Sugriva's eyes with his palm wet with water. Then he took up water in the cavity of his palm, magnetised it with mantras, washed Sugriva's two eyes with that, and said, "O king of the kapis! Restrain your sorrows. In times of such danger like this, even too much affection and love become the cause of one's ruin. Remove your sorrows that stand in the way of action. The Vanara troops have been greatly alarmed at this sight, it is your duty to think of their welfare, and to protect them so long Ram remains senseless. We shall be free from anxiety when Ram and Lakshman regain

their consciousness. Such a thing is nothing to Ram, and from Lakshman's sight it is clear that he won't succumb. The beauty that is rare in a dead person has not abandoned him. Sugriva be patient and encourage your troops. I too shall console the soldiers. Look what the Vanaras with their eyes dilated with fear are whispering to each other's ears. Let them cast off their fears like an used up garland."

Thus saying Vibhishan began to rally the Vanara-troops dispersed in various directions.

In the meantime, sorcerer Indrajit entered Lanka with his army and appearing before his father, Ravan, said with joined palms, "Father! Ram and Lakshman have been destroyed."

Hearing this happy news, Ravan stood up and embraced Indrajit in joy. After smelling his head, Ravan asked Indrajit to speak every thing in details. Indrajit then described to Ravan how he had rendered Ram and Lakshman powerless under the bondage of the Nagpasha. Ravan was extremely delighted at this. His fear of Ram was thus removed and greeted Indrajit again and again.

CHAPTER XXXI

GRIEF OF SITA

The Vanaras guarded Ram by surrounding his body. Heroic Hanuman, Angada, Neela, Kumud, Panasa, Sushena, Nalas, Gaya, Gavaksha, Samprastha, Rishabha, Shatavaii and Prithu guarded Ram with great care. A large number of troops stood there with uprooted trees. They were casting their looks towards the sky hither and thither and at each rustling of a single blade of grass they thought that a Rakshasa was coming.

Here, Ravan after dismissing Indrajit in a cheerful mind summoned the Rakshasis that kept watch over Sita. Trijata and other Rakshasis soon came at his bidding. Ravan then told them in joy, "Rakshasis! Go and tell Janaki that Indrajit has destroyed Ram and Lakshman. Take her in the Puspaka chariot to have a sight of the two. For whose protection Janaki has haughtily spurned me so long that Ram along with Lakshman has been killed in the fight. Now, she has nothing to hope for, or fear from Ram, so she may freely and without any anxious hesitation may accept me. She can not but be mine."

Thereafter, the Rakshasis appeared at the Asoka woods and with the Puspaka chariot went near Sita. Sita at that time was overwhelmed with the sorrow for her husband. The Rakshasis took her up in the chariot and proceeded with her along the different roads of Lanka. By that time news of Ram and Lakshman's death spread from one city gate to another.

After this, Janaki with Trijata arrived at the battle-field. She found the Vanara troops routed and the Rakshasas merry with delight. She found the Vanara heroes cast down with sorrow sitting round the bodies of Ram and Lakshman who were lying unconscious on the ground. Their bodies bristled with arrows, their armours were pierced and cut and their bows and arrows lay at some distance from them. Janaki was upset at the sight of these two lotus-eyed heroes lying on the field of battle the bed of heroes—she began to lament bitterly, "Alas! The astrologers used to tell me that I would be a mother and I would never be a widow. Alack! Their predictions have now proved false. They told me that I would be the queen of a king who would be a great performer of sacrifices, but that saying has proved false on account of Ram's death. The words of those wise have come to nought, for

they predicted that I would be the chief amongst the wives of the heroic kings. The auspicious marks that in the opinion of women, bring royal fortune as she who possesses them is installed on the throne along with her husband, as they said, are still present in my palms and feet! In fact, the inauspicious marks, that an unfortunate woman bears which predicts her widowhood are not at all present in me. But inspite of all auspicious signs everything has come to nought. The Samudrik¹ shastra tells us that the sign of lotus in the palms and feet of a woman shall never be vain, but Ram being dead all these shastras have been proved to be false. My hair is dark blue, fine and even, my eye-brows are joined with each other, my thigh are hairless and round. My teeth are close set and firm, my forehead slightly raised, eyes, hands, legs, thighs and my ankles are symmetrical. My fingers are soft, symmetrical in their middle and marked with the barley-corns in them. Nails are round and my breasts are plump, hard and their nipples embedded in them; my navel in the middle is deep, its sides are raised and; my breast is high; my colour is bright as that of a jewel; the hair of my body is soft down-like and my smile is sweet and gentle. From these signs gentle women called me auspicious. Even the Brahmins versed in astrology use to tell me that I would be invested with crown along with a king of kings. But all these have now proved to be false. Alas! These two brothers who freed Janasthan from its source of trouble, gathered my information, crossed the Sea, but succumbed to an insignificant thing!² These two heroes acquired mastery over Varuna, Agneya, Aindra, and Brahma-shira weapons. Why could they not remember those

1 An occult science that can predict one's nature and fortune from the palmistry.

2 After crossing the sea, says the poet, to be drowned in water collected in a small area like the impression left by a cow's hoof on the ground. (Gospada).

arms at the time of the conflict? These two heroes are the shelter of the helpless."

"Alas! Indrajit has slain them simply through his magic and by remaining invisible. An enemy endowed even with the speed of thought, could not escape from Ram in open fight. Nothing is too heavy or impossible for Time, and death is irresistible, or Ram and Lakshman would not have been thus destroyed. Now, I do not grieve so much for them, or for my mother, as for my mother-in-law, since she is ever thinking when she will see Ram coming back with Lakshman and Janaki from the exile in forest." Then Trijata seeing Janaki thus lamenting said, "O, worshipful lady! Do not be so overwhelmed with grief, your husband is alive. Just hear me why I say. Look at the expressions of the warriors. How eager and angry they are. Had your husband, their leader, been dead they would not have looked like this, nor this heavenly chariot would have carried you here. I assure you, had Ram been dead, the Vanara troops could not have been so much devoid of anxiety. By this time they would have been scattered like a boat without its helmsman. I can infer that Ram and Lakshman have not been slain. O worshipful lady! By our conduct you have touched my heart and have become dear to me. Never did I assure you falsely on any former occasion, nor do I hold out any false consolation to you. To speak the truth, neither the gods, nor the Asura nor Indra can destroy those two heroes. This is what I can assure you from their appearance. Janaki! This is the only thing to be wondered at, that they lie inert and senseless under the Nagpasha. Their beauty is still in them, had they been dead their faces would surely have been distorted, but their beauty remains untarnished.¹ So do not grieve for them, banish your sorrow."

1 Thus we have in Romeo and Juliet

"—beauty's enaig'n: yet

Hearing these from Trijata, Janaki like the daughter of a God, said with joined palms, "O Sister ! May what you say prove to be true."

After that Janaki returned with Trijata in the swift Puspaka car. She got down from the chariot and was conducted by the Rakshasis to the Asoka forest, where she began to think of Ram and Lakshman.

CHAPTER XXXII

GRIEF OF RAM

Ram and Lakshman lay prostrate under the terrible Nagpasha. They were panting heavily like a snake and their bodies were besmeared with blood. Sugriva and other Vanaras in sorrowful hearts surrounded the two brothers. Ram though was firmly tied down under the Nagpasha, still on account of his great physical strength first gained his consciousness and finding Lakshman lying prostrate with a painful countenance, began to lament, "Alas ! What shall I do with Janaki when heroic Lakshman has thus fallen. What further necessity is there for life ? I may find out, if I search the world for it, another woman like Janaki, but never a bother and a warrior like Lakshman. If he be dead I shall certainly give up my life. If I return to Ajodhya without Lakshman how shall I console mother Sumitra shaking with grief, and how shall I break the news to Bharat and Shatrughana ? Lakshman was my companion in exile, how can I now return home without him. In fact, when Sumitra will take me to task for this I shall never be able to bear

Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks.

And Death's pale flag is not advanced there."

that. Therefore, I shall give up my life on this spot. Alas! Curse on me, for me heroic Lakshman has died a miserable death. Brother Lakshman! You used to console me in my sorrows and pain, you are now lying senseless, therefore, you cannot greet me now though stricken with sorrow. O hero! Thou hast fallen on the field where you yourself had destroyed a large number of Rakshasas. Your body is bathed in blood, it bristles with arrows stuck to it and thou art lain on a heap of shafts. For this you look like a setting sun. You have been pierced by arrows in vital parts, and for this you are now mute. But from your expression and look the pain of being struck is evident. You followed me in my exile and this day I shall follow you to the realm of Death. Thou art affectionate towards your kinsmen and ever obedient to me. Now, you had to suffer on account of the misdeed of this heinous self. I do not remember to have ever heard you using any hard expression towards me even in great anger. Your valour is quite formidable. You could discharge five hundred arrows at a stretch, so your prowess is greater than that of Karttavirya. Alas! He who could thwart even Indra's blows by his arrows, who was won't to lie on elegant beds, is now rolling in the dust! I could not instal Vibhishan as ruler of the Rakshasas, therefore this false promise will scorch me for ever. Sugriva! You have become weak on account of myself being overwhelmed with sorrow. Now, you will surely meet with defeat at Ravan's hands, so leave the place instantly. Sugriva! Just cross back the sea with Neela, Angada, Nala and with your troops and their belongings. You have accomplished a very arduous task. Riksha king, Lord of the Golangulas, Angada, Mainda and Dvidida have also done great deeds. Heroic Keshari, Sampati, Gaya, Gavaksha, Sharabha, Gaja and other Vanaras have fought with great valour. These things have nodoubt, been a source of great delight to me, but man can

never overrule his fate. You are my friend and virtuous. You have done what lay in your power, but that has been frustrated on account of my bad luck. O Vanaras! You have acted as friends. Now I ask you to go wherever you wish." Then the Vanaras began to shed tears hearing Ram lamenting thus. At that time, Vibhishan after encouraging the troops, was coming towards Ram with a mace in his hand. The Vanaras seeing that dark-skinned hero coming there all on a sudden took him for Indrajit and dispersed in different directions.

Then Sugriva said, "Look, why the army have become so suddenly agitated, as a craft is tossed by a heavy gale."

Angada replied, "Don't you see that Ram and Lakshman are lying in blood being smitten with arrows?"

Sugriva said, "No that is not the reason, perhaps there is some other cause of it. Look there the troops with their eyes dilated with fear are running away throwing off their arms in panic-stricken face.. They do not feel ashamed of this cowardly act. Nobody looks behind and in hurry they are trampling over the fallen ones."

In the meantime Vibhishan having arrived at there, wished victory to Ram and Sugriva. Thereupon Sugriva addressing Jamvuvan said, "Noble Vibhishan has come. The Vanaras took him for Indrajit and they are running away in fear. Just assure them that it is noble Vibhishan that has come."

Then Jamvuvan by his assurance stopped them from flight and the Vanaras came back finding him to be Vibhishan. Vibhishan was greatly pained at the sight of Ram and Lakshman and having wiped their eyes with his hand with water, said, "These two heroes are great warriors, the Rakshasas have overcome them only by their subtle strategy.

They were engaged in a fair fight, but my nephew Indrajit is a cunning warrior and he has bound them in Nagpasha by his Rakshasi magic. Relying in their prowess I coveted to rule over the Rakshasas, now they are lying on the ground, as if waiting for death. My ambition is gone and the cruel desire of the abductor of Sita has now been fulfilled."

Then Sugriva embracing Vibhishan said, "My noble friend you are Virtuous, you will surely occupy Lanka. Ravan will never succeed. These two brothers are worshippers of Garura¹ and they will soon recover their senses and destroy Ravan with his brood."

Sugriva after consoling Vibhishan, addressing his father-in-law Sushena, said, "O Arya! So long Ram and Lakshman remain unconscious you return to Kishkindhya with them and other Vanaras. I shall myself destroy Ravan with his friends and sons and as Indra retrieve the glory of the gods so I shall recover Janaki."

Thereupon, Sushena said, "My boy! Formerly I witnessed the fight between the gods and the Asuras, and in that the Danavas skilled in the use of arms, destroyed the gods by their demoniac magic. The preceptor of the gods—Vrihaspati—treated with medicines and Mantras, the gods thus rendered senseless and wounded. Let Sampati and Panasa hasten to the Milky sea for those remedies. The name of that medicine is "Visalya Karani." It is heavenly and it grows on hills and that is not unknown to the Vanaras. Wherefrom rose nectar after the churning of the Ocean there are two mountains named Chandra and Drona, the medicine is obtainable at that place alone. Let Hanuman proceed there."

1 Garura-(the eagle) is an enemy of the Nagas (the serpents) hence it means that they were tied down by snakes. Nagapasha means binding with snakes.

In the meantime, clouds overcast the sky and there were repeated thunders and lightning. Heavy gales began to blow and the hills began to shake, and the big traces of the islands began to fall into pieces, as if by the beatings of the wings. The huge pythons and snakes that resided in the Malaya mountain became restless and entered into the depths of the Ocean out of great fear.

Then, the Vanaras saw formidable Garura within a moment. At the sight of Garura the terrible snakes that bound Ram and Lakshman ran away in alarm. Then heroic Garura smoothed their moonlike faces with his palms. At his very touch their bruised faces regained their former loveliness. They regained their former grace, strength, valour, energy, memory and intelligence.

Garura then raised the great hero and embraced. Ram with a gratified heart, said, "O hero! We have been rescued from a great danger through your kindness. I feel myself overjoyed at your sight, as I would have been at the sight of father Dasarath and grandfather Aja. You are beautiful to look at and are adorned with heavenly ornaments and wear an excellent garland on your neck. Thou art clad in elegant apparel. Tell me who thou art?" Garura, with eyes expanded with delight, said, "Ram! I am your friend, my name is Garura. I have come here to help you in difficulty. The powerful Asuras, Indra, Gods, Gandharvas and the Vanaras could not deliver you from the bondage under which Indrajit kept you by the spell of magic. These serpents are terrible and are most obedient to Indrajit, and they, through magic, have assumed the form of arrows. Ram! You and victorious Lakshman are really fortunate. As soon as I had come to hear of this bondage, I came here to rescue you from that. I have removed that bondage. Now, always be on alert.

1 It should be claws if it be a bird.

The Rakshasas, by nature, are cunning, whereas you are quite simple, so do not believe the Rakshasas in the battle field. Be careful from this incident of Indrajit."

Saying this Garura embracing Ram broke forth again, "Ram! Thou art virtuous, you have kindness even for your enemies, now allow me to depart. Don't be curious to know what is the cause of this fond affection between you and me. You will know everything when you will win the war. Only the aged and the young will survive your arrows and you will soon succeed in rescuing Janaki after destroying Ravan."

With these words, Garura, the king of birds, wheeled round Ram and went along the sky with the speed of wind. Then the leaders finding Ram and Lakshman quite hale and hearty repeatedly lashed their tails and set up heroic roars. Mridangas were beaten trumpets, and conch-shells were blown. The Vanaras threw their arms up and roared in delight. Their roarings were heard like the rumbling of distant thunder clouds in rainy nights.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

RAVAN'S ANXIETY.

Ravan, hearing the shouts of the Vanaras, said in the presence of all, "When the heroic yells of the Vanaras, like distant thunders are now heard, certainly there has been some cause of their delight. They, by their roars have even agitated the sea. Ram and Lakshman are hard fast in Nagpasha, still the Vanaras are moving in delight, this has caused grave apprehension in my mind. Go and soon find out the cause of this joy amongst the Vanaras."

Thereupon, the Rakshasas hurriedly issued forth at the command of Ravan and, ascending the city wall they found that Ram and Lakshman have been delivered from the Nagpasha and Sugriva is busily engaged in protecting the Vanara troops. At that sight, the

Rakshasas were greatly mortified, their faces grew pale and sid. Then they descended from the wall in fear and returning to Ravan. Said "O royal Sire! We found the two formidable warriors delivered from the bondage under which Indrajit kept them inert and powerless."

Ravan became anxious at this news, his face too grew dark and pale. He then said, "The arrow that Indrajit acquired through austere panance are irresistible like snakes and glittering like the sun. Indrajit felled those two enemies of mine with that arrow. If it is true that they have been liberated from the bondage of those arrows, then, surely, there is danger to all the troops, Alas could that irresistible shaft be frustrated like this?"

Ravan then panted with great rage and addressing Dhumraksha said, 'O hero! Take a large number of soldiers with you and immediately advance to slay Ram and Lakshman in battle'

Thereupon, Dhumraksha went round Ravan and issued forth for battle and after crossing the gate of the palace, he said to the commander. "I am going to fight, bring the army soon." Then the commander got the army ready for battle. The Rakshasas surrounded Dhumraksha with their heroic roars. They were formidable and warlike. Bells rang at their waists and had different weapons in their hands. Those soldiers came out thundering like the clouds, carrying various weapons, as Shula, Mudgara, Gada, pattisha iron staffs, Mushala, Parigha, Bhindipala, Bhalla, noose and axe. Some clad in armour got upon jewelled chariots decorated with flags and staffs; some upon asses; some upon elephants. Thus the Rakshasa army issued forth like lions in their batches. Heroic Dhumraksha got himself equipped and ascended a chariot drawn by asses with tiger-like and lion-like faces.¹ He proceeded in great

¹ Tiger like and lion-like faces, of course, mean menacing looks. Asses and mules for some purposes are still preferred to horses in military department.

speed in his deep rumbling car towards the western gate there stood Hanuman with a smiling face. At that time, the birds forbade him to advance and a huge vulture fell upon the crest of his chariot. Then, other ravenous birds fell upon his chariot. A huge, white decapitated corpse besmeared in blood, fell before him. The clouds began to rain blood, the wind began to blow furiously, and the earth shook repeatedly. Dhumraksha became sad at the sight of these evil omens, and the warriors that preceded before him were also greatly stupified by these portents.

The great warrior then advancing found the vast Vanara army like an angry ocean threatening with destruction, protected by the prowess of Ram.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

DHUMRAKSHA'S FIGHT

The Vanaras seeing Dhumraksha advancing for a fight, roared in delight of battle. Then a severe conflict ensued between the two sides. The Rakshasas began to scatter away and cut the Vanaras, and the Vanaras too levelled the Rakshasas to the ground by the blows of trees. The Rakshasas in anger with their sharp weapons cut the Vanaras into pieces. The Vanaras became more furious at this and began to fight more bravely. Their bodies were bleeding from the blows of the different weapons of the Rakshasas and they began to destroy the Rakshasas with their huge stones and trees. Gradually the field of battle grew quite dreadful. The dauntless Vanaras began to strike the Rakshas with trees and stones and the blood-drinking Rakshasas began to vomit blood. Some one's flank was torn, some one was cut with teeth, some one crumbled into atoms. Some one was slain with the flag staff, and some with the sword slipped from his own hand, and some by the chariot wheels. Soon the battle field became strewn with the carcasses of elephants,

horses their riders, Vanaras and of the Rakshasas. The Vanaras by spring siezed the face of Rakshasas and tore them by their sharp nails. The countenances of the Rakshasas grew dark and they rushed forward to beat the Vanaras. The Vanaras too forcibly threw them on the ground and began to assault them with their kicks, fist-blows, with trees and fight them with their teeth.

Heroic Dhumraksha seeing the Rakshasas giving way commenced a terrible battle. Some of the Vanaras were hit with Prasa weapon and began to bleed, some fell on the ground being hit by clubs, some were destroyed by Parigha, Pattisha or by Bhindipal. Many ran away in fear from the enraged Rakshasas. Some one was pierced to the heart, some was lying on his side, some had been forked by a trident and some one's intestines bulged out. Thus the horrible fight went on. Then the song of Death broke out in the battle-field-twang of the bow was its lyre, the gasping hiccough of the dying soldiers kept time with that music, and the trumpets of the elephants named Nadda served the purpose of the vocal music. Heroic Dhumraksha began to smother the vanaras thus at ease.

Thereafter, Hanuman seeing the Vanaras thus overcome by the arrows of the Rakshasas, advanced towards Dhumraksha with a huge block of stone. His eyes grew more red from anger. He was in his prowess like his father. Hanuman aimed that huge stone against Dhumraksha; seeing that stone hurled against him jumped down from his chariot and stood on the ground with a club in his hand. That huge stone pulverised his chariot into atoms. Hanuman, then, began to beat the Rakshasas by uprooting a tree. The Rakshasas fell on the ground with broken heads. In the meantime, Hanuman raised a huge stone and rushed towards Dhumraksha. At this, Dhumraksha with a heroic roar advanced with a mace in hand and hurled it against Hanuman's head in great rage. But that ironpiked mace proved futile. Then Hanuman broke Dhumraksha's head with that stone. Dhumraksha at once fell prostrate on the ground like a mountain peak. The

Rakshasas were greatly alarmed at this and hied towards Lanka.

Thus Hanuman destroyed the enemy and caused a river of blood to flow in the field of battle. Hanuman at last got tired and the Vanaras began to praise him again and again.

CHAPTER XXXV.

VAJRADANSTRA

Ravan was greatly enraged at the news of Dhumraksha's death and then addressing Vajradanstra said, "O, hero! Just proceed with an army and kill my sworn enemy Ram with Sugriva and other Vanaras."

Sorceter Vajradanstra immediately set out at this command of Ravan. A large number of elephants, camels, horses and asses¹ followed him in that struggle. Vajradanstra was adorned with excellent crown and arm-plates and he had a magnificent armour on his person. He got upon a golden chariot decorated with flags with bow and quiver in his hands. The infantry followed his car carrying with them Risthis, Tomaras, Musalas, Bhindipalas, Shaktis, Pattishas, Chakras, bows, axe and mace. The Rakshasas were elegantly dressed and they marched like infuriated elephants, and they in their march appeared like a mountain in motion! Veteran fighters with Ankusha and Tomaras proceeded on elephants. A large number of cavalry advanced, mounted on fine chargers. At that time the advancing column of the Rakshasa troops looked like clouds of the rainy season charged with thunder and lightning. They then gradually arrived at the Southern gate where stood Angada. In their march they met with several evil portents. Meteors fell from a cloudless sky, fierce jackals began to howl fearfully, emitting fire from their

¹ Certainly it refers to different classes of fighters, as on elephants back, horses back etc.

mouths, Soldiers began to stumble violently on the ground. Inspite of these evil omens Vajradanstra in his eagerness for fight proceeded undisturbed towards the field of battle. The Vanaras thus seeing the Rakshasas advancing towards them set up a heroic yell, filling all quarters with that sound.

Then a fierce fight ensued between the formidable Vanaras and the Rakshasas. The valiant warriors (on both sides) fell on the ground with their heads and limbs severed from their bodies. Some hurled against his rival various weapons having failed to overcome him by wrestling, or fought with hands long and firm as a bolt. The battle-field was soon filled with a terrible din with the noise of trumpets rumbling noise of the chariots, twangs of the bow, sound of the conch-shells and beatings of Mridanga. Some threw down their arms and began to wrestle with his adversary. Some were slain by fist-blows, or being struck with trees, kicks or slaps. A number of Rakshasas were crushed by the stones hurled against them by the Vanaras.

At that, heroic Vajradanstra to frighten the enemy began to roam about in the battle-field with Pasha in his hand. The powerful Rakshasas became quite restive and began to smother the Vanaras with their sharp weapons. Then, molested Hanuman flared up in rage, and energy. Angada began to strike the Rakshasas with uprooted trees, as the lion kills the small animals. The powerful Rakshasa soldiers fell on the field with broken heads like cut down trees. Then the battle field grew fearful from blood and dead bodies of both the parties. Here and there lay scattered arm pltaes, apparel, and umbrellas. At last, the Rakshasas became restless on account of Angad's prowess. At this the great warrior, Vajradanstra, became highly enraged and began to shower thunder-bolt like arrows upon the Vanaras. Other Rakshasa warriors also began to discharge volleys of deadly arrows from their chariots, The Vanaras in a body fought

against them with stones and trees. The Rakshasas hurled various weapons against the vanaras. Vanaras too hurled stones and trees against them. Then a fierce struggle ensued between the two parties. Heads were broken, legs and hands were cut, and the battlefield became littered with dead bodies of both sides. Crows, vultures and other ravenous birds of prey fell upon the carcasses and made a terrible noise by their clamour. Headless trunks, to the terror of the timid, often rose from the field.

Afterwards the Rakshasas being struck with trees and stones ran away from the battle field. Again Vajradanstra in great wrath entered the Vanara line and began to create havoc amongst them with his arrows. The Vanaras being wounded by his sharp arrows dispersed before him in different directions and all ran to Angada in fear, as the created beings approached Brahma the Lord of creation.

Seeing that, Angada cast an angry look upon Vajradanstra, and Vajradanstra too scrutinised him with angry eyes. Then a great battle raged between the two heroes, and they began to roam about the battle-field like two infuriated elephants. Vajradanstra pierced Angada's heart with flaming arrows, Angada became drenched with blood, and he hurled a huge tree aiming at Vajradanstra, but the latter cut it down to pieces at ease.

Thereupon Angada took up a huge rock and threw it against Vajradanstra. Vajradanstra hurriedly got down from his chariot and patiently waited with a mace in hand, and the chariot with the horses was crushed into pieces. Angada immediately hurled a huge tree on the head of Vajradanstra. Vajradanstra fainted at that blow and began to vomit blood. After regaining consciousness, he struck Angada on the chest with his mace. These two warriors appeared like Mercury and Jupiter in the field of battle. Then the two heroes unseathed¹

1 In the original we have the blade made of Rishibha hide, and

and began to fight against each other with great fencing skill in the course of which they performed various kinds of wonderful movements. Both set up heroic roars being anxious for victory. Both were badly injured with sword thrusts and with their bleeding bodies, they looked like two Kinshuka trees that stood in their crimson blossoms. Both of them suddenly knelt down on the ground. Then Angada instantly got up like a molested serpent, and cut down Vajradanstra's head with his sharp sword. Rakshasas were greatly alarmed at Vajradanstra's death. Vajradanstra's head rolled on the dust and blood sprutted like jets of water. Rakshasas, thereupon, overwhelmed with fear, slowly retired towards Lanka with sorrowful hearts.

Here Angada was surrounded by the Vanaras for his victory and was thanked and honoured profusely for his heroic deed.

CHAPTER XXXVI

AKAMPAN'S FIGHT.

Ravan became furious at the news of Vajradanstra's death and addressing Prahsta who was standing by with joined palms, said, Prahasta! Let Akampana now proceed with the powerful Rashasas skilled in the art of war. This undaunted hero is the defender of the Rakshasa hosts and a great leader of the army in battle. He is most enthusiastic in war, and is always eager to perform what will bring forth good. Now, this great hero will destroy Ram, Lakshman, and Sugriva in battle."

At this commandment of the Rakshasa lord, the Rakshasa army got ready for the war. The grim looking troops with formidable arms issued forth from Lanka. The great, undaunted warrior was dark like a cloud, and voice was deep like the rumbling of a

the sword covered with a girdle of small linking bells. Apparently it is a mistake. It refers to the hilt and the scabbard.

cloud. Him even the gods could not render nervous in the field of battle. That hero mounting on a golden chariot set forth with the Rakshasas in great anger for fight. At that time, all on a sudden evil portents of various kinds appeared on every side. The horses of Akampana suddenly grew weak, and their left eyes began to throb. The wind began to blow in violence and the ravenous beasts and birds of prey to howl. But that lion-like hero remained quite unmoved by them. The Vanaras, however, waited with trees and stones for the advent of the Rakshasas.

A fierce fight commenced. Both the sides exerted their utmost for victory—one side for Ram and the other side for Ravan. They began to howl in anger and to fight with all their might. Dusts raised by the trampling of the warriors covered the sky. Nobody could discern his friend or foe. Only the heroic yells and the sound of their swift treads were being heard. Chariots, horses, flags, weapons, shields etc. could not at all be distinguished in that darkness. The Vanaras slew the Vanaras, and the Rakshasas in fury the Rakshasas for none could distinguish his friends from his foes. At last, the field of battle grew muddy with blood. Both sides fought with trees, clubs, maces, stones, Prashas, Parighas and Tomaras. The Vanaras struck the giant Rakshasas with their fistblows. The Rakshasas too being furious began to destroy the Vanaras with Prashas and Tomaras. Akampana¹ began to encourage the formidable Rakshasas to fight. In the meantime, the Vanaras forcibly snatched away the arms from the Rakshasas and began to destroy them with stones. Then heroic Nala, Kumud and Mainda commenced a fierce fight in anger. They slew a large number of Rakshasas by hurling trees and stones at them.

1 Akampana means the "unmoved," perhaps something like a permanent epithet to his name, as Sir Bedevere "the bold."

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE GREAT SALLY

Thereupon, Akampana became greatly enraged, and by twanging his bow he said to his charioteer, "Look there, the powerful Vanaras are destroying a large number of the Rakshasas. They are standing with trees and stones at a short distance from this place, take me there swiftly. They are very proud of their fighting capacity, I shall destroy them now. It seems they will kill all the Rakshasas."

Then the charioteer drove the chariot according to the above directions of heroic Akampana. Akampana approached the Vanara hosts by discharging arrows from distance. The Vanaras, not to speak of fighting, could not stand before that hero. They ran away from the fight. Then Hanuman approached Akampana seeing the Vanaras thus dispersed in fear.

The Vanaras gathered round Hanuman and they became courageous by the presence of that great hero.

Then, Akampana showered his arrows upon Hanuman like tropical rains. Hanuman without minding the shafts discharged against him, resolved to kill him at that time, and advanced towards him by skaking the earth by his heroic tread. Being fired up by his valour he began to roar repeatedly. He then grew quite formidable like a burning flame, and finding himself without any arms, uprooted a huge rock in great fury. That great hero began to whirl that huge stone in hand. And as Indra, in former times, rushed towards Namuchi with thunder bolt in his hand, so he rushed towards him in great speed.

Thereupon, Akampana seeing that huge rock aimed against him cut it into pieces with his crescent-shaped arrow from distance. Hanuman grew furious at this and he uprooted a large Aswakarna tree in heroic pride and began to whirl it in battle-delight. Then he rushed towards Akampana with that tree in

great speed. Trees were broken by the violence of his speed. He began to destroy elephants, horses, with their riders, chariots and the charioteers. The Rakshasas finding him like a second Death ran away in fear.

Then, Akampana seeing Hanuman approaching pierced him with fourteen shafts with a heroic roar. Heroic Hanuman being struck with the Narachas and the Shaktis, looked like a peak abounding with trees! And he looked like a column of smokeless fire, like an Asoka tree in blossoms. Then, that great hero uprooted a huge tree and crushed Akampana's head with one blow. Akampana was instantly killed. At that sight the Rakshasas grew restless and agitated like trees at the time of earth-quake. The Rakshasas were thus vanquished and they ran away in fear. Vanaras hotly pursued the Rakshasas, who repeatedly looked behind and rushed towards the city gate by trampling each other in great hurry.

When Akampana was thus slain by Hanuman, the Vanaras praised the great hero for his mighty deed. Hanuman being thus honoured showed his modesty to them. The Vanaras set heroic yells in battle-delight and resolved to destroy the remaining Rakshasas. As Vishnu looked formidable after the destruction of the great Asura, Madhukaitabha, so Hanuman looked quite irresistible after the death of Akampana. Then the gods began to praise Ram, Lakshmana, Sugriva, Hanuman and other Vanaras for their great heroic deeds.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

PRAHASTA'S FIGHT

At the news of Akampana's death, Ravan cast sorrowful glance towards his counsellors, then after a brief consultation with them, Ravan, after deciding the course of action, issued forth to inspect the army. He saw Lanka decorated with flags and banners.

guarded by large divisions of the Rakshasa army. Then Ravan addressing General Prahasta said, "O hero! This city of Lanka has now been besieged by the enemy, there is no other way to relieve the city without fighting. But excepting myself, Kumbhakarna, yourself, Indrajit and Nukumbha who else will undertake that task? Therefore, you soon proceed with a large number of troops for achieving victory. The Vanaras will surely run away at your sight. The Vanaras are weak and unruly, and as the roars of lion are unbearable to the elephants, so they won't be able to stand your heroic yells. If they are thus rendered reluctant to fight, Ram and Lakshman will seek our shelter being deprived of help. O hero! In this battle, your death is uncertain, whereas your victory is certain. So you should fight, or tell me what is favourable or unfavourable in words that I have just now said to you."

Then Prahasta, as Sukracharya advised the king of the Asuras, said to Ravan. "O king! We discussed this matter with wise counsellors before. Then there were differences of opinion amongst us. It was then decided that it would have been better to return Sita, or there would be war. Now, that war has begun. You have put me ever under obligation by bestowing on me wealth and honour, I shall do now what is good for you in this time of danger. I do not covet my life, nor my wife and children, nor wealth, I shall sacrifice my life for you in this war."

Then Prahasta addressing the Generals in front of him, said.

"Soon get the whole army ready. This day the ravenous beasts and birds of the forest will be gratified with the flesh and blood of the enemy slain by my arrows."

Thereupon, the Generals got the army ready, and in a moment, the city of Lanka became restive with the movements of the formidable warriors. A terrific din filled all quarters. Some offered sacrifice to fire and

some bowed to the Brahmins. At that time, the wind carried the scent of the sacrificial offerings. The troops put on armours and garlands and stood ready for the march. Then they got upon their elephants and horses, and after paying their homage to Ravan, gathered round Prahasta with bows in their hands. Then Prahasta got upon an excellent chariot, after greeting Ravan and blowing the trumpet. The chariot was furnished with various weapons, it was yoked with swift horses and was bright like the sun and the moon. Its rumbling noise was deep like that of a cloud, and its charioteer was an expert. It was decorated with flags and festoons. That chariot having the "Serpent-banner" streaming over it and covered with golden net, shone with splendour. General Prahasta set forth in that chariot, accompanied by his vast army. Deep trumpets and Dundubhis sounded like the rumbling clouds. The sound of conchshells and of other musical instruments filled the air. The Rakshasas preceded their General with heroic yells. Narantaka, Kumbha-hanu, Mahanada and Samunnata were the four advisers of Prahasta. They were grim-looking and huge-bodied. All these warriors proceeded along with Prahasta. Heroic Prahasta, grim as Death, with his army vast as the sea and strong as herds of elephants, crossed the Eastern gate. The noise of his march mixed up with the heroic roars of the Rakshasas frightened the beasts and birds of Lanka. Then various kinds of evil omens were visible. Ravenous birds of prey began to fly under the sky and follow on the right side of the chariot. Fierce Jackals began to howl. Meteors began to fall in showers. Heavy gales began to blow. The stars and planets grew dim. Clouds began to rain blood on Prahasta's chariot and his troops. A vulture sat upon the flag staff of Prahasta's car, and by its cries it darkened Prahasta's face.

1 The reader will be pleased to note that in dealing with the battle of each Rakshasa General, same things have been repeated again and again, so instead of repeating one and the same thing, we have summarised the repeated portions where it could be done without injuring the original text.

The whip again and again slipped from the hand of the experienced charioteer, the beauty and splendour of that march were gone, and horses began to stumble on the ground. In the meantime the Vanaras seeing Prahasta advancing, went forward with trees and stones. Some Vanaras plucked stones, while others giant trees. Then a great noise ensued. The Vanaras and the Rakshasas yelled in war-delight and began to challenge one another.

In the meantime, ill-fated Prahasta entered the Vanara line as a moth plunges into a burning flame.

Then, Ram seeing Prahasta asked Vibhishan with a smiling face, "Rakshasa-chief! Who is that hero, that is coming with a large host of Rakshasas and how formidable is he?"

Vibhishan replied, "O hero! That warrior is the commander-in-chief of Ravan, his name is Prahasta. One third of the army of Lanka has come with him. He is warlike, skilled in arms, and his prowess is known all over."

After that, the Vanaras got sight of Prahasta. Prahasta is quite formidable and grim-looking. Then a great uproar rose amongst the Vanaras and they began to yell and threatened the Rakshasas coming near Prahasta. The Rakshasas had various kinds of weapons in their hands. Some had swords, some Shaktis, some Rishtis, some Shulas (spears), some arrows, some Prashas, some axes, and some bows. They rushed violently towards the Vanaras. The Vanaras too advanced with huge trees, and stones. As soon as the two sides drew near, a fierce fight ensued. The Vanaras hurled trees and stones. Whereas the Rakshasas began to discharge volleys of arrows.¹ The Vanaras killed a number of Rakshasas, and Rakshasas a large number of Vanaras. They cut and wounded one another with various weapons. The heroic Rakshasas pierced the

¹ It is apparent from the above descriptions that the Rakshasas had a civilised mode of warfare, and they were far advanced in the use of arms.

Vanaras with their arrows and the Vanaras crushed their enemies with stones and trees. Gradually, the battle field was filled with the groans and heroic yells of the combatants. Both the sides were determined.

A number of Vanaras fell at the hands of Narantaka, Kumbhahanu, Mahanada and Samunnata. Then Dvidida slew Narantaka with a stone. Durmukha killed Samunnata with an uprooted tree; Jamvuvan slew Mahanada with a stone and Kapi-Pravira killed Kumbhahanu with a stone.

Thereupon, Prahasta commenced a fearful fight. A mighty eddy was formed in the battle field by the constant motion of the troops. And there arose a deep sound like the rolling of the sea. Formidable warrior Prahasta, made the Vanaras reel under his blows. By degrees, the field of battle became littered with dead bodies, and rivers of blood began to flow. The field of battle grew beautiful like the forest in the advent of Summer¹ and the whole place became impassable, like a great river, having the dead soldiers for its banks, the broken weapons for the trees, the stream of blood for its water, liver and spleens for its thick mud, scattered arms for its weeds, severed heads for its fishes, the blood-thirsty vultures, for its swans, the fat for its foam, and the heroic yell for the sound of eddies! That fearful river flowing towards the ocean of Death struck terror into the minds of the coward, but the brave crossed it with ease, as an elephant does a tank filled with full-blown lotuses.

After that General Neela rushed against Prahasta, as the wind rushes forward to meet the cloud in great speed. Thereupon, Prahasta advanced towards Neela and began to discharge his arrows incessantly at him. Prahasta's shafts entered deep into Neela's body, like cruel snakes into their holes. Then Neela struck Prahasta with a tree. Prahasta discharged a volley of

¹ Perhaps profusion of blood has been likened to the crimson blossoms of summer, hence the simile, though a very unlikely one.

arrows at Neela in anger. Then Neela being unable to disarm villainous Prahasta, calmly bore the arrows, like a bull that with closed eyes bears the sudden outbreak of an autumnal rain.

Then, Neela destroyed the horses of Prahasta by striking them with a Sala tree, and breaking his bow into two pieces set up heroic roars. Then Prahasta jumped from his chariot and rushed towards Neela with a fearful Mushala in his hand. Then the two formidable rivals looked like two infuriated elephants staring at each other for a fatal engagement. Both of them were furious and strong as lions, and both of them struggled for victory and both of them were eager for fame like Indra and Vritra Asura.

Meanwhile, Prahasta with great difficulty struck Neela with a Mushala. Neela was highly enraged at this and struck Prahasta on the heart with a tree. Prahasta without paying any heed to that blow rushed forward with a Mushala. Neela then picked up a huge stone and threw it against Prahasta's head. Prahasta, at once gave up the ghost, and blood sprutted like a spring.

On the death of formidable Prahasta, the Rakshasa army ran towards Lanka in great panic. As the water rushes forth when the dam gives in, so the army could not stay on the battle-field at the death of their general. All being dispirited and over-whelmed with sorrow entered Lanka. Deep sorrow made them mute.

Here Neela in delight of victory approached Ram and Lakshman. At that time, every one praised him for his heroic deed.

CHAPTER XXXIX

RAVANA'S FIGHTING

Then the Rakshasas appearing before Ravan informed him of Prahasta's death. Ravan was greatly overwhelmed with sorrow and rage at this news. Ravan then addressing them said, "Hear me, O Rakshasas! We should no more slight those enemies who have slain my General Prahasta, the destroyer of the heavenly hosts. I shall therefore, myself now take the field. As fire burns the wood so I shall reduce Ram, Lakshman and the Vanaras to ashes."

Thus saying Ravan got upon his chariot, black as cinder; and yoked with noble steeds. Conch shells, trumpets and panavas were blown. The Rakshasa warriors began to brag of their prowess. The Rakshasa king, honoured and worshipped by his people immediately set forth for battle. Being surrounded by the grim-looking Rakshasas—huge as shining mountains—with burning eyes, Ravan looked like God Rudra surrounded by his goblins and genii. On coming out, Ravan found the Vanara army—vast as the sea—waiting for the fight with trees and stones in their hands.

Then mighty Ram, formidable like the king of the serpents seeing that powerful Rakshasa hosts questioned Vibhishan. "O Rakshasa chief! Whose army is that who are equipped with swords, lances, Prasha and various other weapons? They are mounted upon huge elephants like the Mandara hills and are carrying flags and royal umbrellas amongst them?" Noble Vibhishan replied, "O king! That hero who is seated upon an elephant, whose face is red like the morning sun, and who by the weight of his body has rendered the head of his elephant shaky is Akampana.¹

¹ He must be a different person from the warrior whose death has already been described.

The hero who in his chariot is twanging the bow—like the rain-bow—and whose flag bears the ensign of a lion; he is the foremost of the Rakshasas, his name is Indrajit. He who is tall like the Vindhya, Asta and Mahendra hill and who is drawing constantly a big bow is heroic Atikaya. He whose eyes are red like the morning sun and who is setting up a heroic yell seated upon an elephant with tinkling bells attached to its neck is Mahodara. He who is red like an evening cloud and is riding a bright charger adorned with gold, and who is carrying the glittering Pasha arm in his hand is swift Pishacha. He who is coming with impetuous speed riding on a beautiful bull, holding a sharp lance like lightning, is famous Trishira. That dark skinned hero, whose chest is expansive and high whose flag bears the ensign of a Snake, and who is repeatedly drawing his bow, is Kumbha. He who is advancing a jewelled Parigha weapon and whose heroic feats are quite amazing, is heroic Nikumbha. And he who is seated in bright chariot decorated with flags, and furnished with various kinds of weapons is Narantak. And he who is the vanquisher of the pride of the gods and who is surrounded by grim visaged Rakshasas, like God Rudra by his ghastly crews, and over whose head stands the moon-like white umbrella with thin spokes, is Ravan, the king of the Rakshasas. Look what a beautiful diadem adorns his head and jewelled ear-rings in his ears! He is formidable in stature like the Himalayas or the Vindhya hill, He has humbled the pride of Indra and the king of death. He is vigorous like the sun."

Thereupon, Ram said, "Ah! How mighty is this Rakshasa king, Ravan! He, by his own lustre, has rendered himself quite incapable of being gazed upon. In fact, his whole person is surrounded by a halo of energy like light, so I could not survey his real form. His physique is more splendid than that of the gods and the Gandharvas. His followers too are stalwart and equipped with sharp weapons. Ravan being surrounded by these grim-looking

followers, looks like the king of death surrounded by the ghosts. It is my good luck that he has come within my view. I shall now wreak my anger on him for abducting my Sita." With these words, Ram stood up, bow in his hand.

In the meantime, Ravan addressing the mighty Rakshasas said, "Go inside the city and live there without any anxiety or fear, Guard the city-gates and the high ways. You have come in a body with me, if the Vanaras come to know of it, they will surely enter the empty city."

His counsellors then proceeded to their destinations at this command of Ravan.

After that, as an elephant enters a big stream, so Ravan entered the Vanara line. At the sight of Ravan, Sugriva, the Kapi chief, rushed forward with trees and stones in hands and hurled a mountain peak against him. The great hero, Ravan, cut that stone into pieces by his goldplated arrows, and being greatly enraged, discharged a fatal arrow, terrible as a huge snake. That shaft was swift like lightning and wind, and was emitting sparks like (crackling) fire. Ravan, aimed that arrow to kill Sugriva with it. Then that arrow penetrated into Sugriva's body as the arrow of Kumar¹ formerly cleft the Krauncha hill. Sugriva fainted on the ground with a piteous groan. The Rakshasas, thereupon, roared in delight.

Then heroic Gavaksha, Gavaya, Sushena, Rishabha, Jyotirmukha and Nala rushed towards Ravan with huge rocks in their hands. Ravan, by his arrows, frustrated the trees and stones of the Vanaras, and showered volleys of shafts over them. Then many of the huge Vanaras fell dead on the ground, while others dispersed in fear with their bleeding bodies and broken limbs. Many of them sought shelter

¹ Kumar was the commander-in-chief of the gods, the son of Mahadev.

of Ram. Then heroic Ram could no longer remain indifferent. He stood up with bow and arrows in hand.

Meanwhile, heroic Lakshman approaching Ram with joined palms said, "Arya! I am alone sufficient to kill that villainous Ravan, just command me and I shall destroy him."

Thereupon, spirited Ram said, "Then go, my boy! and fight very cautiously against Ravan. He is mighty, and wonderful is his prowess. Even the three worlds, cannot stand his wrath. At the time of fighting, keep your eyes always upon his weak spots as well over your own. What shall I say more, you must always protect yourself with your eyes and bow."

Then heroic Lakshman set forth for battle after greeting Ram with due honours.

Ravan standing at a short distance from the place, was spreading death and havoc amongst the Vanaras from his ponderous bow. At this, Hanuman ran towards his chariot and raising his right hand, as if to frighten him, said "Thou villain! Thou hast become invincible of the gods and the Gandharvas by the boon of Brahma, but hast reason to be afraid of the Vanaras. Now, I have raised my right hand with five fingers, I shall snatch away your old life from you."

Thereupon, mighty Ravan said, "You Vanara! Strike me without any fear, and let you be famous for it. I shall first test your prowess and shall kill you afterwards." Hanuman replied, "Just remember that I first sent your son Aksha to Death."

Ravan became greatly enraged at this and dealt a severe slap on Hanuman's breast. Hanuman reeled at that blow, but recovering himself, dealt a counterslap to Ravan. Ravan at that blow trembled like a hill in earth-quake. The Vanaras and other sight-seers shouted in delight. Then Ravan

after recovering a little, said. "Bravo! Bravo! You have sufficient strength and you are my worthy adversary." Hanuman said, "O Rakshasa! It is indeed a slur to my prowess that you are still alive after my slap. But you are bragging like a fool, just strike me once more and I shall send you to Death."

Ravan's eyes grew red with anger and he struck Hanuman with his fist on the chest. It was like a thunderbolt and Hanuman repeatedly fainted from that blow.

Then Ravan leaving Hanuman there, advanced towards Neela and wounded him with a deadly arrow.¹ Being smothered by that Neela hurled a huge stone against Ravan in one hand.

By that time Hanuman having recovered himself from that blow, got himself ready for the fight, and said, "Ravan! It will be unfair to attack you when you are engaged in fighting with another."

Ravan cut Neela's rock with a sharp arrow. Thereupon, Neela flared up with rage and hurled Aswakarna. Shala, and Mango trees against him. Ravan cut them into pieces, and showered a volley of arrows upon the Vanaras.

In the meantime heroic Neela grew small and suddenly perched upon his flag-staff. Ravan burned with anger at this audacity of Neela. Then Neela began to spring from point to point. Ravan, Lakshman and Hanuman were all struck with wonder at this astonishing feat of Neela. Ravan too was taken aback by this quickness of Neela, and he took up a flaming fire-arm to kill him. The Vanaras chattered in delight at this discomfiture of Ravan. Ravan was greatly enraged at this, and holding the fire-arm in his hand, he was at a loss to decide what to do. Ravan casting his eyes repeatedly upon Neela perched on the flag-staff, said, "Vanara!

¹ Almost everywhere the arrow has been compared to a dreadful snake.

You have deluded me by your quickness, now save yourself if you can, you are assuming different forms just to save your life. I shall now discharge my fire-arm and this will surely put an end to your life." With these words, Ravan shot the fire-arm at the breast of Neela. Neela being struck by that fell on the ground, being scorched with fire. Due to his father's virtue and his own prowess his life was saved.

Then, Ravan seeing Neela lying unconscious proceeded in his deep rumbling car towards Lakshman and getting near him he began to flourish his bow again and again. Then Lakshman said.

"Rakshasa king! Just fight with me, it is not worthy of a hero like you to fight with the Vanaras." Thus saying he twung his bow.

Ravan hearing the twanging sound of Lakshman's bow and his proud words, said "For my good luck, you have come within my ken, you are a silly fool and you will have to die in my hands."

Thereupon, Lakshman said to grim Ravan, "O king! The heroes never vaunt, why do you then brag foolishly? I know your might and your valour. What is the good of idle vauntings. Come, I am standing with my bow."

Then, Ravan discharged seven sharp arrows against Lakshman. Lakshman cut them into pieces by his sharp arrows. Ravan, seeing his own arrows cut into pieces like a chopped off snake, was greatly enraged and began to shower volleys of arrows upon Lakshman. Lakshman ward off his shafts by Khura, Ardhachandra and Bhalla weapons, and stood still in his place. Then Ravan was astonished seeing his arms thus being frustrated by Lakshman, began to shower sharp arrows again at him.

Lakshman, in order to kill Ravan, hurled a fiery arm against him. Ravan cut that into pieces, and

struck Lakshman on the forehead by a formidable weapon like doomsday fire, granted by Brahma the lord of creation.

Lakshman was sorely smitten by that blow and fell unconscious on the ground. Then on regaining consciousness he pierced Ravan with three arrows. Ravan too fainted from that blow. When regained his senses, he was bathed in blood. In anger, Ravan took up Shakti offered to him by Brahma. That Shakti was quite formidable for the Vanaras. Ravan hurled it against Lakshman. Lakshman seeing that flaming weapon coming in violent speed against him cut it to two pieces by a fiery shaft. Still violently struck against his expansive chest. Lakshman was mighty, but he fainted from that blow.

Ravan siezed unconscious Lakshman in his mighty arms, but that hero, who could pluck the world with the Himalayas, Mandar and Sumeru could not raise him from the ground. At that time Lakshman remembered that he was the unsevered part of Lord Vishnu. In fact, Ravan could not move him even an inch. Then Hanuman angrily struck Ravan with his fist on the chest. Ravan fainted on his chariot from that blow. He began to bleed profusely through his mouth, eyes and ears. He reeled under that blow and could not know where he was. The Vanaras then shouted in delight.

Then Hanuman took up wounded Lakshman in two hands and brought him before Ram. Though Lakshman was unmoveable by his enemies, but became light on account of Hanuman's devotion and friendship. Ravan's Shakti at that time left Lakshman and returned to its former place. Then Ravan after recovering his consciousness took up his bow and arrows. Lakshman too was somewhat restored, as he was part of Vishnu. In the meantime, Ram finding large number of Vanaras destroyed by Ravan, rushed towards him. Then heroic Hanuman approach-

ing him said, "O hero! As Lord Vishnu riding on Garura, the king of birds, slew the Ashuras, the enemies of gods, likewise get upon my back and destroy Ravan this day."

Thereupon, Ram got upon Hanuman's back and rushed towards Ravan seated on his car. It seemed as if enraged Vishnu was rushing against Vali, the Danava king.

Ram began to twang his bow and said, "Wait. Thou Villain! How would you save yourself after inflicting such injuries on me? Even if you seek shelter of Indra, Yama, Surya, Brahma, Agni and of Rudra there is no escape from me. Thou hast struck Lakshman with a Shakti, and I swear that I shall send you to death with your family and children. I have slain fourteen thousand Rakshasas of Janasthan."

Thereupon, Ravan struck Hanuman, the carrier of Ram, with a dreadful arrow like doomsday-fire. Hanuman's valour grew hundredfold at that blow. Ram too grew angry seeing Hanuman thus struck with arrows, and instantly cut Ravan's chariot with its horses, wheels, umbrellas, flags and charioteer with sharp cutting arrows. As Indra struck the mount Sumeru with his thunderbolt, so he struck Ravan on his expansive breast with a formidable shaft. The great hero that even bore the thunderbolt of Indra became agitated and smothered with that blow. His bow fell from his hands. Then Ram cut his glittering crown with a sharp arrow. Rakshasa king Ravan, then looked like the sun grown dim, or like a snake deprived of his venom.

Thereupon, Ram said, "Ravan you have fought fiercely and a number of Vanaras have lost their lives in your hands. You are exhausted now, therefore, I refrain from destroying you now. Now I ask you to withdraw immediately for rest. After that come back on your chariot with your warriors and witness my prowess."

Then Ravan having his pride thus humbled, entered Lanka with a sorrowful heart.

Ram too with the Vanaras brought round Lakshman.

Then the Devas, Ashuras, Goblins, Urugas, and terrestrial and aerial beings clamoured in delight seeing Ravan thus worsted in fight.

CHAPTER XL.

KUMBHAKARNA ROUSED FROM SLEEP.

Rakshasa king, Ravan, has been humbled and sad. He has been defeated at the hands of Ram, as the elephant is vanquished by the lion, or as snakes by Garura. Ram's arrows are dreadful like comets and blinding like the flash of thunder. Ravan was extremely grieved thinking of those arrows.

Then, he addressing the Rakshasas from his golden seat said, "My counsellors ! I am like Indra in prowess, but since I have been defeated by an ordinary man, all my austere devotion and penance seem to be futile. Formerly, Brahma told me that I had to fear only from men. Now his words have come to be true. I asked from Him the boon of being invincible of the Devas, Danavas, Gandharvas, Rakshasas and the Sarpas (snakes), but at that time I did not even think of man. Now, it seems that man is Ram, the son of Dasarath. Formerly, Anaravya, the Ikshaku king cursed me saying "O Thou, stain to your race ! A hero will be born in my line, who will destroy you with your sons and friends. Formerly, once I used force against Vedavati. she too cursed me for her insult. It now appears that, that Vedavati has been born as

Janaki. Moreover, Goddess Uma, Nandiswar, and Varun's daughter Punjiksthala and Rambha cursed me in such a manner, that I do now perceive its consequence. In fact, the words of a Rishi never proves vain. O Rakshasas! Now to overcome the present crisis. Gather round the city-gates and ramparts. Heroic Kumbhakarna is now buried in deep sleep, go and rouse him from that sleep. There is no limit to his prowess. He is the vanquisher of pride of the Danavas. He is lying unconscious in sleep on account of Brahma's curse. He has been sleeping since nine months before this war. He is the greatest of the Rakshasas, that great hero will destroy Ram, Lakshman with all the Vanaras. His prowess and Valour in battle are well known, but he is buried in a profound slumber. I have met with defeat at the hands of Ram. Now, if he is roused from sleep the sorrow of my defeat will be removed. If he does not help me in my distress, of what use he is to me?"

There, the Rakshasas with various kinds of food and viands and scented garlands went Kumbhakarna's abode. The palace of Kumbhakarna was exceedingly beautiful and was a Yoyana in length on each side. Its gate was spacious and the interior was filled with the fragrance of flowers.

Strong Rakshasas fell at a distance being thwarted by the force of his respiration, and with great difficulty they, then, entered the abode. The pavement of that chamber was made of gold. The Rakshasas on entering the room found Kumbhakarna huge as a mountain, lying stretched on his bed. Then the Rakshasas in a body tried to rouse him from sleep.

The hairs of Kumbhakarna's body were erect and bristles-like. He was breathing heavily like a serpent. The Rakshasas were whirled about by the wind of his breath as by a tornado. His nostrils were dreadful and his mouth as wide as the nether-region. He was emitting an odour of fat and blood from

his body. He wore a golden armour and his glittering diadem shone like the sun.

Then Rakshasas placed meat and viands in huge heaps in front of him. Deer, buffaloes, boars were kept in great profusion, and jars of blood. Then they besmeared his body with excellent sandal and made him to sniff at the sweet fragrance of sandal and garlands. The perfume of incense filled every quarter. Many sang his praise, some roared like deep rumbling clouds, and some blew conch-shells, white as the moon. Many shouted in a body and began to brandish their arms. Then the birds flying under the sky being overpowered by that terrible noise fell on the ground. But still the deep slumber of Kumbhakarna could not be disturbed. Then the Rakshasas began to strike him on the chest with clubs and maces. Some inflicted fist blows. But they were unable to stand before Kumbhakarna on account of violence of breathing. The Rakshasas were ten-thousands in number. They in a body resolved to rouse Kumbhakarna—dark as collyrium dye—from sleep. But being unsuccessful in their attempts they exerted their utmost. They then began to goad elephants, camels, and to spur horses and asses to trample upon his body. They began to blow trumpets, conch-shells and Panavas and began to beat him with huge logs of wood and large clubs. That terrific din filled Lanka, but Kumbhakarna's sleep was not broken! Then the Rakshasas were enraged at their own failures. Some began to pull him by the hair, some bit his ears, and some threw water into his ear-holes, still Kumbhakarna lay inert in sleep. Many began to strike him with Shatagni. Then Thousand elephants began to trample upon him in great speed.¹ From the trampling of the elephants he felt the sensation of pleasant touch and his sleep was broken. And being hungry, he rose from sleep and yawned repeatedly. That hero who was like a huge python by extending his mighty arms and opening wide his horse-like mouth, he began to yawn. His

face looked like the sun risen over the summit of the Sumeru hill. His breath blew like a heavygale blowing among the hills. He stood up. He looked formidable like the Universal Desolution, that takes place at the end of each cycle of creation. His eyes were red like two burning coals and a fierce light was being emitted from them like intense flash of lightning. His two eyes looked like two shining planets.

Then the Rakshasas pointed to Kumbhakarna profusion of food and drink kept for him. He began to consume buffalo meat and harm and other quantities of flesh and being thirsty drank a large quantity of blood. Then the Rakshasas finding Kumbhakarna fully gratified, slowly drew near him and they began to surround him on all sides after bowing profoundly to him. Kumbhakarna's eyes were still heavy with sleep and were half-opened in drowsiness. He cast his glance around him, and being surprised at this awakening, addressing the Rakshasas he said, "O Rakshasas! Tell me why have you thus roused me from sleep? Is not every thing well with the Rakshasa king. Ravan? Has he been afraid of some enemy. Whatever it might be, you have not roused me from my sleep for some insignificant cause. However, I shall remove all cause of fear. I shall cleave asunder the Mahendra hill and render fire cool. "Now tell me why you have awakened me from my slumber?"

Thereupon, the counsellor, Yupaksha, said with joined palms, "O hero! We have nothing to fear from the gods, but man is the cause of our present troubles. We have been sorely disturbed by a man. In fact, the great fear that has been caused by a man could not be caused by the gods or the Asuras. Huge Vanaras have now besieged Lanka on all sides. Ram has been extremely irritated by the abduction of Sita, and we have been greatly alarmed by his prowess. Before this only one Vanara came and burnt Lanka. Prince Aksha was slain by him. Ram

through slight let Ravan the enemy of the gods, to escape. What could not be effected by the gods, Asuras and the Daityas has been accomplished by man ! He let off Ravan to escape with his life."

Then Kumbhakarna, on hearing of the defeat of his brother. Ravan, said with rolling eyes, "O counsellor ! I shall first defeat Ram and Lakshman with the Vanaras this day and then shall see the Rakshasa king. I shall this day entertain the Rakshasas with the flesh of the Vanara, and myself shall drink the blood of Ram and Lakshman."

Then Mahodara said, "You should first hear Ravan, and decide your action after considering all pros and cons, and then shall fight with the enemies."

In the meantime the Rakshasas entered Ravan's palace and approaching him said, "Now your brother Kumbhakarna has risen from sleep. Will he set-out for fight or you wish him to come and see you here ?" Ravan delightfully replied,

"I want to see him here. Bring him with due honours."

The Rakshasas then repaired to Kumbhakarna and said, "The king desires to see you, please see him and enhance his delight."

Then Kumbhakarna left his bed, washed his face and took his bath. He then wished to take invigorating wine. The Rakshasas soon brought him wine and various kinds of eatables, Kumbhakarna drank two thousand jars of wine. On account of drink he appeared hot and flushed, and his strength increased hundred-fold. In his anger he looked like fire death and being surrounded by the Rakshasas he entered the palace of Ravan. The firm earth shook under his tread. He lighted the public roads by the effulgence of his body, as the sun lights up the world by his own energy. On his both sides, stood the Rakshasas in joined palms. It seemed, as if, Brahma was proceeding towards the palace of Indra

the king of the Gods.

At that time, the Vanaras standing outside were alarmed by the sight of that mountain-like hero. Some of them took protection under Ram, the giver of shelter to the refugee. Some of them fell on the ground from fear, and the great hero, Kumbhakarna, wore a crown on his head and seemed to see with the sun in the effulgence of his energy. The Vanaras seeing that huge hero of amazing appearance ran away in different directions.

CHAPTER XLI.

KUMBHAKARNA'S FIGHT

At that time, Ram began to survey Kumbhakarna with bow in his hand. That stalwart hero was proceeding along the sky like God Narayan about to put forth his third leg to cover the sky.¹ He was dark-skinned, like a cloud full of rains, his arms were protected with golden armours. Ram was greatly surprised at the sight of that great warrior and asked Vibhishan. "Who is that dark-skinned hero, with yellow eyes huge as a mountain? In the midst of Lanka with a diadem on his head he looks like a lightning in the midst of clouds. This great hero to be the solitary flag-staff of the world. The Vanaras are running away in various directions. In fact, I have never seen such a

¹ The allusion to a foreigner might be unintelligible. The Ashura king, Vali, who was famous for his unbounded charities, gave what one asked of him. God Vishnu to free the Gods from Vali's yoke assumed the form of a Brahmin-dwarf and approached Vali for alms. He asked Vali for three paces of ground, Vali readily assented to his humble prayer. Vishnu then covered the heavens and the earth by his two feet.

creature. Now tell me who is he, Is he a Rakshasa or an Asura?"

Then, wise Vibhishan replied, "Ram! He is the son of Viswashrava, Kumbhakarna of great prowess. In hugeness of body no other Rakshasa is equal to him. He has vanquished even Indra and Death in battle. He has conquered large number of gods Gandharvas, Vidyadharas and others. The gods took that grim looking hero with lance in his hand for God Rudra, so they could not destroy him through their ignorance. Kumbhakarna is spirited by nature and the prowess of other Rakshasas has been obtained as boons, but it is different in his case. As soon as he was born he began to devour number of creatures from hunger. At that, all the creatures were greatly alarmed for their lives and going to Indra informed him of the cause of their fear. Then Indra in rage hurled his thunder against this great hero. Being restive from that blow he began to cry in great pain. But all creatures grew alarmed at that cry. Then Kumbhakarna in great fury picked Airavata's tusk and struck Indra on the chest. Indra was greatly shaken by that blow and began to bleed from his body. The gods and the Rishis, all grew pale at that sight. Then Indra along with other creatures repaired to Brahma, the lord of creation, and told him about the destruction of the hermitages and abduction of other peoples' wives by Kumbhakarna, and they submitted, "O, Lord! If Kumbhakarna devours creatures like this, creation will soon be denuded of created beings."

Hearing this from Indra's lips, Brahma, the Grand-sire of creation, summoned the Rakshasas before him by chanting Mantras. The Rakshasas soon appeared before him and amongst them was Kumbhakarna, and all that were present were greatly alarmed by his appearance. Then he said with some agitation, "O Rakshasa! Certainly, Viswashrava has created you for the destruction of beings, so you will lie buried in sleep like dead person." Then Kumbhakarna being overpowered by the curse of Brahma fell asleep even

in the presence of the latter.

Thereupon, Ravan with anxiety said, "O Lord ! The Kanchan trees has grown, why do you cut it down at the time of bearing fruits ? Kumbhakarna is your grandson, and it is not proper for you to curse him thus. Your words will never prove false, so he will ever remain buried in sleep. But you will be pleased to fix a definite time for his sleep and for the time of his awakening."

Then Brahma said, "Ravan ! This Kumbhakarna will remain asleep for six months and will be awake only for a day. This hero, on that day, will roam over the world with his mouth wide open with hunger and like burning fire will consume all beings. O Ram ! Ravan has roused Kumbhakarna from fear. That hero issuing forth from his abode, is coming devouring fast the Vanaras in this way. The Vanaras are running away hither and thither at his very sight. In fact, it is impossible for the Vanaras to resist him. It is now desirable to announce among the Vanara army that it is no living being, but a machine has been set up. The Vanaras will then grow fearless."

Ram hearing these well meaning words of Vibhishan, said to general Neela ! Go and wait with the army drawn in battle array and collect stones and trees and besiege the gates, ways and the exits from the city."

Thereupon, Neela said the Vanaras, "My soldiers ! The Rakshasas, just to frighten us, have set up a machine. So don't be alarmed. After this great heroes as Gavaksha, Sharabha, Hanuman and Angada arrived at the city-gate with stones and trees. The Vanara troops relying on Neela's words grew courageous and ready for battle. They looked like clouds hanging over the mountains.

CHAPTER XLII.

MEETING WITH RAVAN

In the meantime, heroic Kumbhakarna drowsy from sleep was proceeding along the well-decorated public roads. The Rakshasas began to shower flowers on his head. A large number of Rakshasas were accompanying him. At a short distance, stood Ravan's palace, spacious, beautiful and adorned with golden nets. As the sun enters a bank of clouds, so herioc Kumbhakarna entered Ravan's residence and espied Ravan from distance the earth shook under his mighty tread as he entered the hall. After crossing threshold he found Ravan seated on the Pushpaka¹ with a sorrowful countenance.

Then Ravan, seeing Kumbhakarna, stood up from his seat and received him by advancing forward with delight. On Ravan's resuming seat, Kumbhakarna after bowing down to his feet, asked "What is the matter, my royal lord?"

Thereupon, Ravan embraced Kumbhakarna in delight. And after being duly greeted by Ravan Kumbhakarna took his seat and said, "Tell me, king! why Thou hast roused me from sleep, what cause of fear has arisen? Who is to be destroyed at this moment?"

Ravan replied, "O hero! you were long buried in sleep, therefore, you could not know the cause of my fear. King Dasharath's son, Ram, has entered Lanka after crossing the impassable ocean. He has bridged the sea and easily crossed the waters with his Vanara troops, and has overflowed with his Vanaras the forests and gardens of Lanka. Now good many leaders of the Rakshasas have been killed, but there has not been any

1 It must be throne.

great loss on the side of the antagonists. Not to speak of their losses, the Rakshasas could not defeat the Vanaras. O hero! Now save us from this crisis. Go and kill the enemy. This is why I have roused you from sleep. My resources have almost been exhausted, you will find only the aged and the young surviving in Lanka, please protect them just out of pity. Undertake this arduous task and remove the sufferings and troubles of a brother. I have never requested like this before. I have absolute confidence in your victory. In former times, at the time of war against the gods and the Asurās, you were the rival of the gods and inflicted signal defeat on them. Amongst the created beings there is none strong like you, please achieve my object by mustering all your strength. Disperse the enemy by your might as the wind scatters away the autumnal clouds. Now this is the work that is desirable, coveted and good for me."

Hearing these entreating words of Ravan, Kumbhakarna said with a smile.

"O King! What we apprehended at the time of holding consultation with Vibhishan, has befallen you for neglecting our good counsel. As., in fact, the sinner is soon damned to perdition, so you have soon to reap the consequences of your wicked deed of abducting another's wife. Formerly, you did not out of pride, calculate the evil consequences of this foul act therefore this crisis has arisen. The king who performs late what is to be done early, and does that first what is to be performed last, he is devoid of any sense of polity. His acts who has no regard for time and opportunity become futile as clarified butter offered into unsanctified¹ fire. The king who acts after consulting his ministers about five essential elements² in matters alike peace and war is always in the right path. In truth, he attains success who understands everything by his intelligence

1 Evidently it means not sacrificial fire.

2 Five elements:—the ways and means for beginning an action i.e. Initiative, the man power, time and circumstances prevention of

and with the help of his counsellors, who examines carefully his friends and foes, and who follows religion, wealth and desire in due time." But that king or prince who can not decide what is best, or what to be preferred amongst these three, all his knowledge of Shastras is vain. Who is intelligent, versed in polity in economics and decide his course of action after consultation with his ministers his fortune and prosperity remain unshaken. Who is acquainted with the policy of equality, sowing dissensions amongst the enemy achieves success. There are some kings however, who from their conceitedness argue without knowing the true import of the Shastras or of polity. One should not take him as his adviser who is not well versed in politics and economics him who gives bad advice in the garb of a good counsel. Some advisers in order to ruin their master incite him to wicked deeds by their ill advice, and some join with the powerful enemies of his master. The king should discern and know such treacherous advisers at the time of giving advice. The king who is fickle and meddles in everything is doomed to ruin and his enemies always take advantage of his weakness, as the birds enter through the holes of the Krauncha hill. He who is indifferent about his own defence from a slightful neglect of his enemy, meets with difficulties and soon loses his throne. O king! What queen Mandadari and brother Vibhishan have said formerly appear to me to be good and beneficial. Now, act in whatever manner you like."

Then Ravan grew angry at these words of Kumbhakarna and said with a frown, "Kumbhakarna! I am worthy of your respect like a preceptor and to be honoured as your superior. But, whereas you have the presumption to advise me! What is the good of your wasting so many words? Now, do what I have asked you to do. It is useless to repeat that which I have once declined to accede to. Now think what

difficulties and success.

3 Who knows when and how to attain wealth, to fulfil desire and to practise religion.

is best in the present situation and act accordingly. If you have any love for your brother, or any prowess in you, or if you think it is your duty, to remove my sorrows and sufferings brought about by my bad policy then do it. He is a friend indeed who stands by a distressed person, and who helps a man out of difficulty."

Then Kumbhakarna finding his brother thus aggrieved, consoled him with sweet and cogent words. He said "O king Just listen to my words. Be easy, banishing your anger and fear. Please do not express yourself as so very helpless so long as I am alive. I shall today kill him who is the cause of your fear. Now, whether you be in adversity or in prosperity it is my duty to speak to you as a friend and a brother, what is good for you. I am willing to do what an affectionate friend is ready to do for his friend in distress. To speak the truth, the Vanaras finding Ram and Lakshman dead, will run away in utter helplessness. You will be happy seeing Ram's head severed from his trunk by my hand and Janaki will be exceedingly sorry. The Rakshasas of Lanka have lost their friends and relations in battle and they will feel happy, seeing with their own eyes the destruction of Ram and Lakshman this day. After destroying the enemy, I shall myself wipe their tears with my own hands. To-day, the huge body of Sugriva like a mountain will lie stretch like a cloud with the sun in it on the field of battle O king! Myself and other Rakshasas assure you again and again about the destruction of your enemy, then why do you not banish your sorrow? Ram is an ordinary human being, he will have to kill myself first then he may do any injury to you, I have not the least fear of being slain by the hands of a man. Now, order me to proceed to the battle. What necessity is there of yourself meeting the enemy on the field of battle. I shall surely destroy the enemy even if he be highly powerful. I shall kill even Indra, Vayu, Kuvera and Yama if they be hostile to you. O king! When this stalwart warrior, with sharp teeth, will roam about the battle-field with a sharp lance in hand, who will be able to stand that sight? Even Indra will be frightened

by my heroic roars at that time. Or when leaving aside my weapon, I shall smother the enemies by my bare arms only who will then be able to stand before me without any risk to his life? I do not want any arms, I shall slay even Indra by the prowess of my arms. O king! To speak the truth, if Ram can survive this fist-blow then surely my arrows will drink his blood in no time. O king! Why are you so anxious when I am still alive? Banish your fear of Ram, I am going to destroy him now, Shall kill Ram, Lakshman, Sugriva and that Hanuman who killed the Rakshasas formerly and put Lanka into flames. I shall devour the Vanaras in my hunger. If Indra or Brahma stand in your way to victory still I shall secure victory and fame to you. In my anger even the gods will lie prostrate on the ground. I shall conquer death, shall devour fire, pull down the starry firmament with the sun to the ground, I shall kill Indra, drink the ocean, pound the mountain and rend the earth into pieces. Living beings will witness to-day the strength of this Kumbhakarna ever buried in sleep. Even heaven is not enough to satisfy my hunger. My royal lord! I am now going to attain more and more happiness by destroying the enemy. Forget your sorrows in the company of bright woman and drown your sorrows in drink. Just attend to your work. After Ram is slain this day, Janaki will ever be obedient to you."

CHAPTER XLIII

MAHODARAS'S SPEECH

Then Mahodara addressing Kumbhakarna said, you are, no doubt, born in a noble line, but you are most ugly and very haughty and you can not understand any thing, subtle nor can fully judge a thing. It is absurd to hold, that the Rakshasa king is incapable of judging

of what is good or evil but you are saucy and garrulous from your very infancy, therefore you have wasted your breath by talking useless things. The Rakshasa king has full knowledge of time and circumstances. He knows fully how to improve his own position and to render the position of his adversary comparatively worse, and knows how to keep himself in a position when there is no chance of gain to him, nor that of any loss to the enemy. What wise king will perform that thing about which even those who do not honour the wise and the aged, and whose intellect is weak and who chiefly rely on their physical strength, waver, which? And just you are quite incapable of comprehending antagonistic virtues, fully. You see, action is the source of all virtue, wealth and desire. Who has no activity, has no energy or valour. It is he who acts suffers or enjoys the bad or good consequences of his act. The end of virtue and wealth is the attainment of salvation, and by some special acts one may attain heaven and success. He who does not practise virtue or neglects the attainment of riches¹ commits sin, but who slights his desires does not commit any wrong. The fruits of righteous acts and of wealth occur either in this world or in the next, but the good consequences of following one's desire take place immediately.² So a king should satisfy his desire. And to speak the truth, we heartily approve of the action of our royal master, of course there is no harm in meeting an enemy bravely, but your proposal of going to the battle-field singly is improper and I shall presently show you the reasons for it. How can you hope to conquer single-handed the man who has killed a number of Rakshasas at Janasthan? Don't you find the Rakshasas too much alarmed who had suffered defeat at Janasthan? Knowing heroic Ram to be as formidable as a dreadful

1 Perhaps it means all that contribute to the material prosperity and happiness of the person and his community.

2 The passage is rather difficult. It seems what Mohodara means is this :—Virtue may not be rewarded in this world, one's endeavours for prosperity may not be immediately crowned with success, but the attainment of the objects of common desire may be immediate.

snake or burning flame, how, do you dare to provoke him? Ram is quite irresistible and formidable who would dare to face him without any fear of death? It seems to me that the whole army will be in danger? So you should not go alone. What fool thinks of subduing an undaunted enemy at ease, who has a strong following? How you dare to fight,¹ Ram like whom there is no warrior amongst men and who is mighty as Indra himself."

Mahodara then turning towards Ravan said, "O king. Why are you vainly waiting after securing Janaki? Janaki will just now obey your will if you so desire. In this matter I have hit upon a devise. Just listen to me and think over it and if it meets with your approval you may adopt the same. My proposal is this. First it should be announced every where that Kumbhakarna, Dvijibha, Samhradi, Vitardan and myself have set forth to destroy Ram in battle. We shall fight valiantly against Ram, if we win there will be no need of that devise but in case we be defeated then you should do what I now advise you to do. We shall come back from the battle-field with wounds received from arrows inscribed with the name of Ram and shall give out that we have devoured Ram and Lakshman and then shall ask for our reward from you. In the meantime have this news of Ram and Lakshman's death spread through your spy, Gajaskandha. Then you will distribute riches, apparel, garlands, servants maids and other things as if you have been mightily pleased amongst the heroes returned from battle, and you will begin to drink in joy. Thus after the news of Ram's death being circulated all over. You should go to the Asoka garden and should console Sita in seclusion and tempt with the offering of riches. If Janaki be thus deceived by this demonstration of sorrow she will obey your will. Knowing her beautiful husband to be dead, out of despair

1 It is quite unnatural that a strong supporter of Ravan will speak in eulogistic terms of Ram, but here the Versifier (certainly not the great Valmiki) could not resist the temptation of introducing much repeated things about Ram.—Translator.

and out of womanly frailties common to a woman, she will yield to you."

Formerly she was brought up in great happiness, now she has been smitten with sorrow. so now finding that happiness is within your reach she will yield to you, O king to me it seems to be the best way of attaining your happiness. But obstacles will impede as soon as she will see Ram. So you should not be anxious for battle. It is not possible to secure that amount of happiness in battle as it is possible to attain here. O king ! without incurring any risk of life and without any loss of army score a victory over your enemy that will enable you to attain fame and prosperity."

Then heroic Kumbhakarna said to Ravan. "O king ! I shall remove thy fears by, slaying that wicked Ram this day. Be thou happy free from any fear of enemy. A true hero never boasts in vain like an empty autumnal cloud. In battle field I shall execute my bragging words."

Then Kumbhakarna addressing heroic Mahodara said, thou coward ! What thou hast said may be agreeable to weak and conceited princes. You are afraid of battle, therefore, it is your duty to please your master by flattery. In fact, you have spoilt every thing by your faults. What miseries have befallen Lanka, it is denuded of troops and its treasury is empty, only the king remains. To speak the truth, you have acted like enemies in the garb of friends. After this I shall immediately set forth for fighting to undo the mischiefs produced by your evil policy."

Thereupon Ravan smilingly said to Kumbhakarna. This Mahodara has been greatly frightened by the prowess of Ram therefore he is not much in favour of war. O hero ! There is none like you in love and friendship towards me. Now proceed to win victory. You see, I have roused you from sleep just to destroy the enemy. In fact this is a crisis for the Rakshasas Now set forth holding a lance in your arm like Death with his noose and devour Ram and Lakshman with the army. The

Vanaras will run away in different directions at your very sight and the hearts of Ram and Lakshman will rend in sorrow."

With these words, Ravan became confident as if his sorrows were at end, and he seemed to get a life. On account of that his face in delight grew beautiful like the full moon. Then Kumbhakarna got ready for the battle. He took up a sharp steel lance wrought in gold. That lance adorned with a garland of scarlet flowers looked like a veritable thunder-bolt. It was emitting sparks like fire incessantly. Kumbhakarna snatching up with force the huge lance, stained with blood of the enemies and that was the destroyer of the gods and the Asuras, said, "O king what need have I of any army I shall go alone in the battle field and devour the Vanaras to appease my hunger." Then Ravan said, "O hero! The Vanaras are powerful and skilled in battle Finding you alone they might kill you by their bitings. So you proceed being surrounded by troops armed with maces and lances, and come back victorious by destroying the enemies of the rovers of night."

Then, Ravan descending from the throne put on Kumbhakarna's neck a golden necklace adorned with gems, bright as the moonshine. Then after putting armour, gloves, and other excellent ornaments in their right places Ravan fixed ear-rings to Kumbhakarna's ears and a superbly fragrant garland on his neck. At that time, that large-eared warrior being thus adorned, looked like sacrificial fire. His waist was tied up with dark-red girdle, and it seemed as if the Mandara mountain had been fastened round by snakes at the time of churning the ocean. He then put on golden armours glittering like the lightning. He was impregnable on account of that armour and he looked wonderful like the Himalaya mountain tinged with the evening rays. When thus equipped, he stood up with a lance in his hand and looked like Narayan ready to overcome the three worlds by his three feet.

Then that mighty Rakshasa hero got ready for departure after embracing, greeting and wheeling round Ravan. Ravan blessed him. At that time conch-shells and trumpets began to be blown. Horses, elephants, chariots, any armed troops followed him. Rakshasas riding on snakes, camels, asses, lions, elephants, deer and birds followed him in numbers. A beautiful umbrella was held over Kumbhakarna's head and when he started for battle the Rakshasas showered flowers on his head. A large number of infantry followed him, they were grim-visaged and highly powerful. They were athletic, tall and dark as collyrium dye, and their eyes were red. They carried in their hands sharp swords, lances, axes, bhindipales, maces and parighas. Heroic Kumbhakarna being followed by that formidable infantry issued forth like Death. That crooked warrior, drawing the army in battle array, said with a cruel laugh, 'You see, as fire burns moths and flies, I shall burn with the fire of my rage the leading Vanaras this day. Nay, what is their fault these denizens of forest are 'innocent Ram is the cause of this siege of Lanka, so I shall kill him first.'

Thus encouraging the troops, Kumbhakarna disturbed the sea by his heroic roars. At that time, dreadful omens were seen on all sides. The earth shook with its seas and forests, the sun grew dark, the vulture perched on the flagstaff and jackals began to howl. At last the vanaras espied him like God Rudra on the field of battle and ran away in fear and many of them stumbled on the ground like uprooted Sala trees.

CHAPTER XLIV

KUMBHAKARNA'S FIGHT.

Then Kumbhakarna began to roar in battle-delight, that resounded like thunderclaps. The Vanaras ran away in fear at his very sight.

Then Angada seeing the Vanara troops thus frightened, addressing Neela, Nala, Kumad and Gavaksha, said, "O heroes! Where are you fleeing away like ordinary Vanaras, forgetting your rank and birth? Turn back. What is the good of saving one's life thus? What you see there, is only a dreadful illusion. We shall destroy that illusion by our prowess. Come back."

The Vanaras were thus somewhat encouraged and they returned to the battlefield with trees and stones and began to hurl them against Kumbhakarna in great anger. But huge trees and stones crumbled into pieces being dashed against his adamant body. Then Kumbhakarna began to smother the Vanaras as fire reduces the woods into ashes. Many Vanaras fell on the ground like Kinshuka trees, crimsoned with blood, many fell into the sea, many ran into forest and many ran over the bridge. At that moment, they had no courage or time to look forward or backward, every one's face was pale with fear. The Bhallukas hid themselves amongst the trees and hills and some fell on the ground like dead and some ran away. Thereupon heroic Angada said, "O Vanaras! Be patient, we shall fight boldly. Though you are running away, but I do not see any refuge of you in the three worlds. Now, turn back. Why are you so anxious to save your lives? If you return being vanquished your wives will laugh at you, that laugh of scorn is worse than death to a man of honour. You are born of a noble and mighty race now whither do you run away being thus frightened? why you are running away without displaying your valour. Surely you are low. Whither has gone your

prowess of which you boasted so much to help your master therewith?"

Being encouraged by Kumbhakarna's words the Rakshasas set up a heroic roar that seemed to agitate the ocean. At that time, various evil portents became visible. The clouds turned gray as ashes, and there were showers of burning meteors and thunder and lightning shook the earth. Jackals began to howl fearfully, and birds in a circle began to fly on the left. A Vulture perched upon Kumbhakarna's lance. His left eye and left arm began to throb. The sun grew dim and the pleasant breeze ceased to blow. Kumbhakarna was blinded by his fate, so he did not notice these bloodcurdling omens. Then the mountain-like huge hero crossed the city-ditch by a stride and appeared before the Vanara army, the Vanaras ran away in different directions at his sight. They stumbled on the ground like cut down trees from fear. Kumbhakarna's hand was like a formidable bolt. In the field of battle, he for the destruction of his enemies appeared like God Rudra at the time of universal destruction with the mace of Death in his hand.

CHAPTER XLV

KUMBHAKARNA'S FIGHT

The Vanaras unable to stand before Kumbhakarna, ran away in fear of their lives. Angada after taking them to task for their cowardly conduct, said.

"Either we shall die and reach the region of the blessed unattainable by the weak and the coward; either we shall enjoy all the luxuries in the abode of the heroes¹ after death or by our victory we shall

1 Amongst the Greeks also there was a belief in the existence of a

achieve imperishable fame on earth. Look, that Kumbhakarna is like a mouth about to leap into fire. and there is no escape from him. We are recognised as heroes by the warriors, if we run away in fear of life, then this scandal will be known all over that thousands ran away in fear of one man.

Thereupon, the Vanaras while running away, replied in words unworthy of a heroic soul, "O prince ! Kumbhakarna is fighting tremendously, none can stand him in the battle-field. Life is dear to us."

With these words the Vanara troops took to their heels. But Angada after assuring them again and again and holding before them hopes of victory, rallied them round with great difficulty.

The Vanaras then grew calm, and returned back to the field of battle. They were delighted with the assurance of Angada and commenced a fierce fight with Kumbhakarna, and many advanced forward with trees and stones against Kumbhakarna. Giant Kumbhakarna too being greatly enraged at this began to kill them. And within a short of time a number of Vanaras lay dead on the field. As Garuda, the king of birds, devour the snakes so Kumbhakarna began to devour the Vanaras siezing them by force.

In the meantime, Dwivida rushed forward with a stone and hurled it with great violence against Kumbhakarna. But that stone missed Kumbhakarna and fell amongst the troops. It crushed many warriors, elephants and chariots. Thereupon the formidable Kumbhakarna with a tremendous yell began to kill the Vanaras with sharp arrows. Then Dwivida hurled another stone in the midst of the army. It killed a fresh number of troops elephants and chariots.

In the meantime, Hanuman got upon the sky and began to hurl stones and trees upon Kumbhakarna's head. Kumbhakarna cut those trees and stones into

happy isle where the heroes dead in battle repaired after death, where Ulysses met with Achilles in his voyage to his native home,—Ithica.

pieces with his lance, and he advanced towards the Vanaras with his lance in his hand. At that, Hanuman struck Kumbhakarna with a peak. Blood flowed in stream from his body and he was stunned by that blow. Then that great hero, like a luminous mountain, pierced Hanuman's breast with his sharp, flaming lance. Hanuman was stunned by that blow and began to vomit blood, and began to groan. Thereupon, the Rakshasas began to roar in delight:

Then Neela after assuring and rallying the Vanara troops, hurled a huge stone against Kumbhakarna, but that was crumbled to pieces by Kumbhakarna's first blow and fell on the ground with sparks.

In the meantime, Rishibha, Sharabha, Neela, Gavaksha, Gandhamadan, these five heroes—rushed against Kumbhakarna and began to assault him some kicked at him some slapped and some fisted him but instead of feeling any pain, Kumbhakarna rather felt a pleasing sensation from that beating. Then Kumbhakarna caught Rishabha by his hand and pressed him hard. Rishabha fell senseless on the ground with crimsoned face and Kumbhakarna then kicked at Gavaksha, slapped Neela, and fisted Sharabha. They began to bleed from their bodies and fell down on the ground like cut down Kinshuka trees. Then thousand of Vanaras rushed against Kumbhakarna and jumped over his body and began to bite again and again, and showered on him fist-blows. Then Kumbhakarna with the Vanaras over his body appeared like a hill with trees grown over it. Kumbhakarna began to devour the Vanaras. The Vanaras being cast into his wide mouth—like the bottomless pit—came out through his ears and nostrils. Then Kumbhakarna in anger began to tear them off to pieces. And in no time the battle field became gory with fat and blood. Kumbhakarna roamed amongst the Vanara troops spreading havoc like the Doomsday fire. He with his lance looked like Indra with his thunderbolt and Death with his noose. And he began to smother the Vanaras, as fire burns down dry woods in summer.

Then the Vanaras began to groan hideously, and took shelter under Ram.

In the meantime, heroic Angada rushed towards Kumbhakarna with a huge rock and by frightening the Rakshasas by his heroic roars he hurled it on the head of Kumbhakarna. Thereupon Kumbhakarna's wrath was kindled like fire and he rushed towards Angada putting the Vanaras into flight by his heroic roar and hurled his lance against him. Then skilful warrior Angada, quickly changed his position and Kumbhakarna's lance became frustrated. Then Angada by a mighty spring slapped Kumbhakarna at the breast. Kumbhakarna was stunned, and then recovering himself dealt a fist blow against Angada. Angada fell senseless by that blow.

After that Kumbhakarna proceeded towards Sugriva with a lance in his hand. Sugriva too, seeing Kumbhakarna coming near him, sprang up and took up a huge rock and advanced forward to meet his adversary. Thereupon, Kumbhakarna stood before him outstretching his arms. Kumbhakarna was all over besmeared with Vanara-blood. At that Sugriva said, "O Rakshasa! Many warriors have met with their death at your hands. You have achieved a very arduous task. Certainly, your fame will be greatly enhanced: Now leave the Vanara soldiers. What good will you reap by slaughtering the insignificant ones? Now do I hurl this rock against you. Resist it if you can."

Then Kumbhakarna said, "O Vanara! You are the grandson of Parjapati, and the son of the Riksha king. You have both valour and fortitude, therefore dost thou brag so much."

Then Sugriva hurled that adamant rock and struck Kumbhakarna on the breast. But that rock crumbled into pieces by coming in contact with his expansive chest. At that the Vanaras were greatly mortified, and the Rakshasas began to shout in delight. Kumbhakarna was highly enraged and threw his glittering lance like lightning against Sugriva, by opening wide his

mouth. In the meantime, Hanuman sprang up, siezed the lance with its golden chain and broke it into pieces. He easily broke the steel lance by bending it over his knees. The Vanaras were greatly delighted at that. The Rakshasas desisted from the battle in fear. There upon, Kumbhakarna broke down a peak of the Malaya mountain and hurled it against Sugriva. Sugriva fainted from that blow, The Rakshasas shouted in joy. In the meantime, Kumbhakarna took away heroic Sugriva as the wind takes away the cloud. Kumbhakarna with Sugriva in his hands looked like the Sumeru hill with lofty peaks. The gods were greatly astonished at this and created a great noise by their clamour. Kumbhakarna repaired with Sugriva in the midst of the praises of the Rakshasas and the noise of the denizens of the heaven. The Vanaras being too much frightened left the field in hurry. Thus taking away Sugriva, Kumbhakarna thought that with the destruction of Sugriva everything of Ram would be destroyed.

Seeing all these, intelligent Hanuman thought. Sugriva had been captured, what shall I do now? I shall do what is proper. I shall now slay Kumbhakarna. If Kumbhakarna dies of fist blow, then Sugriva will be released and every body will be glad. But what is the necessity of doing such a thing. If Sugriva falls in the hands of the Gods and the Asuras he will free himself by his own valour. Perhaps he is now unconscious on account of blow received, therefore he can not realise his situation. He will soon regain his consciousness and do what is good for himself and for the Vanaras at large. But if I rescue him, he won't be pleased with that, moreover there will ever be a stigma to his name, so let me wait for a short time, he will himself free him from Kumbhakarna's grasp and prove his prowess thereby." Having decided in this manner, Hanuman began to encourage the Vanaras by his assuring words.

In the meantime, Kumbhakarna entered Lanka with Sugriva, whose life was pulsating in his veins. All were struck with wonder by that sight and began to shower

flowers on his head. Then Sugriva slowly began to revive in the cool breeze that blew along the high ways of Lanka and with the sweet smell of fried rice and spray of water that were sprinkled upon Kumbhakarna's head as Sugriva was within the clutch of Kumbhakarna's arms. He slowly opened his eyes and saw the public roads of Lanka. Thus finding himself within the grasp of his adversary, Sugriva began to devise what he was to do. What steps he would take that might be good both for himself and the Vanaras.

Thus thinking Sugriva, all on a sudden, tore Kumbhakarna's ears with his nails, bit off Kumbhakarna's nose with his sharp teeth, and tore Kumbhakarna's sides by kicking simultaneously with his two legs. Kumbhakarna began to bleed profusely. He threw down Sugriva in anger and began to strike him with all his might. The Rakshasas began to beat him right and left. But all on a sudden Sugriva sprang up like a kundakaball and ran to Ram,

Kumbhakarna with his torn ears and nose began to bleed, as fountains and brooks run in a hill, and his collyrium black colour being gory with blood, he appeared like an evening cloud tinged with the crimson rays of the setting sun. Then, that big warrior again resolved to fight, and finding no other weapon took a huge club and appeared again on the field of battle. In his wrath he began to devour the Vanara troops, emerging from the city of Lanka. In his hunger and fury he began to devour two or three Vanaras at a time. He could not even distinguish the Rakshasas at that time, and devoured a good many of them. He seized the Vanaras and the Rakshasas by his hands and threw them into his mouth. Blood and fat trickled down his elbows. Then the Vanaras ran away in great fear and took shelter under Ram.

In the meantime, heroic Lakshman commenced a great fight. He pierced Kumbhakarna first with seven arrows then with a number of shafts. Kumbhakarna broke these arrows into pieces. At that Lakshman grew

enraged and pierced Kumbhakarna's golden armour with a volley of arrows. Dark skinned Kumbhakarna with the arrows, then appeared like the sun surrounded by the clouds. Then in a thundering voice addressing Lakshman, Kumbhakarna said, "O hero ! I have vanquished even Death, but since you have thus ventured to fight against me, you will surely be famous for this. Not to speak of fighting, that you have succeeded in standing before me for so long, is enough glory for you, Formerly even Indra mounted upon his Airabata and with his hosts of gods could not do that. Lakshman ! You are still a boy, and I have been greatly pleased with your valour. Now, allow me to go to Ram for battle. You see it is my object to kill Ram and with his destruction everything will be over. What else may remain I shall destroy that hereafter."

Lakshman replied with a (contemptuous) laugh. "O Rakshasa ! I do not dispute your prowess that even the gods could not resist it. Now, look there stands Ram firm as a rock."

Thereupon, Kumbhakarna leaving aside Lakshman proceeded towards Ram, shaking the earth by his heroic treads. Then Ram struck him on the heart with a severe shaft. Being thus struck by Ram's arrow, Kumbhakarna with a terrific yell pressed forward towards Ram. In Kumbhakarna's anger fire with cinders began to come out from his mouth. At that time, his club slipped from his hand and being deprived of all weapons he began to fight with fist-blows and slaps. Being wounded by Ram's arrows he began to bleed in torrents. He was beside himself with rage and fury and began to devour the Vanaras and the Bhallukas and brandishing a huge rock in his hand he advanced towards Ram. Kumbhakarna hurled that rock in great violence against Ram. Ram cut that into pieces by seven gold-plated arrows. That rock fell on the ground and crushed two hundred Vanaras to death.

In the meantime, heroic Lakshman often thinking of hundreds of ways of slaying Kumbhakarna, addressing

Ram said, "O worshipful lord! This warrior being rendered by the smell of blood have lost his judgment of distinguishing the friends from the foes. So he is devouring the Vanaras and the Rakshasas alike. Now let the Vanaras get upon him and the vanara leaders surround him on all sides. If this villain is weighed down with heavy weight then he wont devour any more while coming forward to fight."

Thereupon, the Vanaras being delighted with Lakshman's words, got upon Kumbhakarna who was greatly enraged at this and began to shake them off from his body, as a vicious elephant shakes off its rider by shaking his back.

Thereupon, Ram took up his bow in anger and he stared at Kumbhakarna as if to scorch him with the fire of his wrath. Ram then advanced towards him. At that sight the Vanaras smothered by Kumbhakarna grew courageous.

Ram held in his hand a golden bow like a formidable snake and from his shoulder slung a quiver full of arrows.

Assuring the Vanaras, Ram hurried towards Kumbhakarna. Formidable Vanaras surrounded Ram. And Lakshman following his brothers's step, found Kumbhakarna with red hot eyes, a crown on his head and blood streaming from his body. Kumbhakarna like an enraged elephant that guard one of the quarters of the globe, rushed towards everybody. He was tall like the Vindhya and the Mandar hill and blood streamed from his mouth, as rains from the clouds. He was licking his elbows drenched with blood. He was emitting a fierce effulgence like fire and could not be stared at.

Ram seeing that warrior grim as Death, twang his bow. Kumbhakarna unable to bear that sound rushed forward towards Ram in great wrath.

Seeing Kumbhakarna, heroic Ram with arms long like the body of snake, said, "O Rakshasa chief! Here

am I standing, Ram the destroyer of the Rakshasa race, with bow and arrows in my hand ; come, don't be sorry, you will soon meet with your end at my hands."

Thereupon, Kumbhakarna hearing the name of Ram, burst forth in a sardonic laughter and rushed towards him by trampling over the Vanaras. Then that heroic Kumbhakarna said in a thundering voice, that struck terror into the hearts of the Vanaras, "Ram ! I am neither Viradha, nor Khara, nor Kavandha, nor, Vali, nor Maricha, but Kumbhakarna himself. Just look at my iron-club, with this I formerly conquered the gods and Asuras. Though my ears and nose are torn, still do not slight me. Now first display your prowess to me. I shall witness that first, and devour you afterwards."

Thereupon, heroic Ram being greatly enraged with Kumbhakarna's words' shot arrows against him. But Kumbhakarna was not a bit pained by it. The arrow that could penetrate seven palms at a time, and which slew a great hero like Vali, fell flat on Kumbhakarna. That blood-stained warrior easily bore Ram's shafts as showers of rain on his body, Then he violently whirled his formidable club by which he thwarted the arrows hurled against him and kicked a large number of Vanaras. Then heroic Ram fixed a Vayuvya¹ arrow to his bow and discharged it against Kumbhakarna. The weapon, as soon as it was discharged, tore off Kumbhakarna's hand with the club, Kumbhakarna cried hideously in pain and that huge hand like a (broken) cliff crushed many Vanaras to death. Then the surviving Vanaras looked (wistfully) at the fighting between Kumbhakarna and Ram. Kumbhakarna with his severed arm looked like a hill deprived of its peak. In the mean time, Kumbhakarna uprooted a big Sal tree in one hand and rushed with that against Ram. Ram cut off that hand by Aindra's weapon. That severed hand fell like an inert mass on the ground and it crushed Vanaras, trees and rocks by its weight.

1 The word means pertaining to the wind.

2 It means appertaining to Indra.

Then Kumbhakarna with a terrible yell rushed towards Ram, Ram cut off his two legs with two sharp crescent-shaped weapons. The legs fell on the ground with a terrific crashing sound filling all quarters with it. Being thus deprived of his arms and legs, Kumbhakarna by gasping wide his horse-like mouth, rushed towards Ram. At this, heroic Ram filled the cavity of his mouth with arrows. Kumbhakarna's mouth was gagged and he lost his speech. He then fainted with a painful groan. Then Ram took up a dazzling Aindra weapon irresistible like death and hurled it in great speed like a thunder against Kumbhakarna. That Aindra weapon, like smokeless fire, flew fast along the sky and lighted up the whole horizon with its own effulgence and cut Kumbhakarna's huge head adorned with ear-ring. When the head of that hero fell, it crushed the city wall, city-gates and edifices. Kumbhakarna's huge body by the force of the momentum fell into the sea. It reached the bottom of the ocean by crushing fishes and crocodiles by its weight. When that hero—the enemy of the gods and the Brahmins—was thus destroyed the earth with hills and forests and the gods clamoured in delight. Devarshis, Maharshis, Pannagas, Guhyakas, Yaksha, Gandharvas and Pakshis, all in wonder looked at the heroic feat of Ram.

Then the Rakhasas were struck with panic at this death of Kumbhakarna and ran away and began to shriek in fear at the sight of Ram as the elephants move away at the sight of the lions. As the sun being freed from the grip of Rahu after the eclipse, shines in its splendour, by destroying all darkness by its rays, so Ram shone forth in all his effulgence amongst the Vanaras. Then their faces beamed in delight like lotuses (of the morning) and greeted Ram again and again in gratefulness. Kumbhakarna hitherto never met with any defeat in battle. He vanquished the heavenly hosts by his powers. And as Indra, the king of the gods, slew Vritrasura so Ram destroyed Kumbhakarna in fight and delighted at his death.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE SAD NEWS

The Rakshasas seeing Kumbhakarna thus slain by Ram, hastened to Ravan, and said. "O King! That great Kumbhakarna, after destroying the Vanaras, has met with his own death. He smothered them for sometime, but was at last, rendered inert by Ram. His headless trunk obstructed the gate way of Lanka. His ears and nose were torn, his hands and legs were cut off and he has been destroyed like big tree consumed by the forest fire. His bloodstained body is half-immersed in the waters of the sea."

Then the Rakshasa king, Ravan, was smitten with grief and he fainted from intense sorrow at the news of Kumbhakarna's death. Devantaka, Narantaka and Trishira cried at the death of their uncle. Mahodara and Mahaparshwa shed tears at the news of their step-brother's death.

Then Ravan after regaining consciousness began to lament in bitter sorrow, "Alas, Kumbhakarna, subduer of enemy's pride, why hast thou forsaken me so suddenly? Whither hast thou gone without removing my sorrows and the affliction of my relations. At whose assurance I used to defy the gods and the Asuras, that my right hand has been taken away from me. I am no longer alive, it seems. How could Ram slay that hero who humbled the Asuras and who was like the Dooms-day fire? Upon whose body thunder could not produce any impression how he could be destroyed by Ram's arrows? The Vanaras are now clamouring above in joy at your death. The Vanaras, now, thinking of this opportunity will infest Lanka and beseige the inaccessible gateways of the city. I have no more need for kingdom, nor any charm for Janaki. What shall I do with Janaki? When Kumbhakarna is dead, what is the use of living any more? If I cannot slay

Ram, the destroyer of my brother, it is better to die. To-day I shall repair where Kumbhakarna has gone. I do not wish to live even for a moment in absence of my brothers. I injured the gods before now they will surely laugh at me (at my miseries) Alas, Kumbhakarna! Thou art dead, how shall I vanquish Indra without your help? Formerly, I slighted Vibhishan's words out of ignorance, now do I suffer for it. Since I have heard of Prahasta's and Kumbhakarna's death, the words of Vibhishan have been tormenting me with remorse and shame. I am now reaping the consequence of turning away virtuous Vibhishan. This is the said result of my own misdeeds."

Then the Rakshasa king with a grief-laden heart began to lament bitterly and at last fainted from too much sorrow.

Then Trishira finding the Rakshasa king thus overwhelmed with sorrow, said, O king! Though our uncle, the great hero Kumbhakarna, is dead, still a great hero like you should never lament like this. Your prowess is capable of conquering the three worlds then why do you lament like a weak person? You have Shakti given by Brahma. You have impenetrable armour, splendid bow and arrows and chariot yoked with thousands of asses, that produce a deep rumbling noise like a cloud. By your arms, you have repeatedly conquered the Suras and the Asuras, now it is necessary for you to punish Ram. Rather, you remain here, let me go to the battle and I shall destroy your enemy as Garura, the king of birds, destroyed the snakes. As Sambarasura was slain by Indra. Narakasura by Vishnu, so Ram will lie prostrate on the battlefield, being slain by me."

Then Ravan, whose end was near, revived in delight, as if he got a new lease of life, from Trishira's words. Devantaka, Narantaka and Atikaya became buoyed up with joy at the prospect of battle, and in their enthusiasm they clamoured saying 'Let me go first, let me first proceed.'

They began to roar in war-delight. Those warriors were versed in black art, were capable of journeying through the sky and were the vanquisher of the gods and the Asuras. They were great heroes, and their fame spread everywhere. Never any thing was heard about their defeat amongst the gods, Gandharvas, Kinnaras and the Uragas.¹ They were proud of their own valour, they were versed in all kinds of learning, they were skilled in battle and possessed great knowledge of science. Ravan being surrounded by those valiant sons, looked like Indra, the king of heaven, surrounded by Gods the vanquishers of the Asuras. He embraced them repeatedly and having commissioned Mahaparshwa and Mahodara for their protection, blessed them for achieving victory.

Then those mighty heroes, being equipped with war-like things bowed to Ravana and set forth for battle.

Mahodara, with quiverful arrows got upon a cloud-like elephant (descended from the family of Airavata) and thereby he looked like the setting sun (in the midst of the evening clouds.) Prince Trishara got upon a chariot full of arms and yoked with noble steed, and he appeared like a threatening cloud with lightning, or like a formidable comet. He, in his triple crown looked like the Himalayas with its three golden peaks. Heroic Atikaya was another son of Ravan. Having been thoroughly equipped for fighting he got upon an excellent car. It was very nicely built and weapons were stored in it. Atikaya had a golden crown on his head, and excellent ornaments on his body. He then shone like the southern mountain in the morning rays. Being surrounded by the Rakshasa warriors he looked like Indra encircled by the gods.

Then Narantaka mounted upon a golden steed, like the heavenly horse Uchai-Shrava, that was in fleet-

¹ Uragas means serpents, perhaps a sect of aborigines whose national emblem was Snake.

ness like the wind, or like the flight of thought. He carried only one weapon in his hand a meteor-like glittering Prasa. Heroic Devantaka took a huge Parigha wrought in gold, and he looked like God Vishnu with the Mandara mountain at the time of churning the ocean. The great warrior Mahaparsha, took a formidable club and looked like god Kuvera the lord of wealth.

Thus all these heroes issued forth from Lanka like gods from the heavenly city of Amaravati. A large number of Rakshasas followed them on horse backs, elephants and chariots. At that time, those bright princes looked like luminous planets in the sky. Their upraised arms against the sky looked like a flock of cranes white as the autumnal clouds. They set forth in great speed with the fixed determination either to conquer the enemy or to embrace death in battle. Some of them roared in battle delight, some brandished their arms against their opponents. The sky seemed to be rent with their war-cries.

On coming forward, the Rakshasas found the Vanaras standing ready with trees and stones in their hands. The Vanaras too marked the Rakshasas' advance. That vast army with jingling sounds, composed of elephants and horses was dark like a cloud and in it the great warriors shone like burning fire and was quite incapable of being stared at like the sun. The Vanaras at this roared repeatedly with trees and stones in their hands. The Rakshasas too yelled in war-delight at the sight of the Vanara army.

Then the Vanaras entered the Rakshasa line that extended like a range of hills. Some began to roam in the sky and some in the field of battle being restless with rage. Then a fierce fight ensued. The Vanaras began to shower trees and stones upon the Rakshasas, and the Rakshasas prevented them by their sharp arrows. The Vanaras began to strike the Rakshasas with trees and stones. Some of the Rakshasa's heads were pounded with stones and some one's eyes came out

of their sockets on account of fist blows received. The Rakshasas being thus smitten by the Vanaras yelled in unbearable pain.

Then, the Rakshasa leaders began to cut the Vanaras into pieces by their sharp lances, swords, Prasas, Shaktis and maces. Warriors on both sides began to fight for life and levelled their adversaries to the ground. The battle-field soon became covered with arms and the dead bodies of the Vanara and the Rakshasa soldiers. Blood flowed in stream. Rakshasas struck the Vanaras by snatching away stones and trees from their hands, and the Vanaras too struck the Rakshasas wresting the weapons from their hands. The armours of the Rakshasas were cut and torn and blood oozed out from their bodies like exudation from trees.¹ The Vanaras destroyed chariots, elephants, horses with their trees and stones. The Rakshasas cut off the trees and stones of the Vanaras by their sharp crescent-shaped weapons and lances. Soon the battle assumed a very dreadful aspect.

CHAPTER XLVII.

NARANTAK'S DEATH.

In the meantime, Narantaka on horse back entered the Vanara line, as a fish enters the waters of the sea. He held a sharp Shakti in his hand. That hero on entering the Vanara line, in a moment killed seven hundred Vanaras with a Prasa. The denizens of heaven flocked over Narantakas's head to witness his fight. Within a very short time his way became muddy with blood and fat. No sooner the Vanaras attempted to display their valour, they were cut into pieces by his sharp Shakti. As fire reduces the woods into ashes so Narantaka began to destroy the Vanaras. No sooner the Vanaras raised trees or stones to hurl they were

¹ Wordsworth, "The bleeding pines their odorous gums distil."

struck down like mountains by thunderbolts and lay prostrate on the battlefield. Narantaka began to roam about like a heavy gale during the rains trampling the Vanaras everywhere with his flaming Prasa upraised. Not to speak of fighting, the Vanaras were speechless with wonder and could not even stand before him. Narantaka cut into pieces with his flaming Prasa in whatever position he found one either seated, or standing upon a chariot.

When that Prasa fell upon the object aimed at, it hit like a thunder-bolt, and the Vanaras being unable to stand before that dreadful weapon, yelled in agony they fell on the ground like cut down trees or like cliffs, cleft as under by lighting.

But in the meantime, the Vanaras who got themselves wounded in their fight with Kumbhakarna recovered from their injuries and came to Sugriva. Sugriva found that the Vanaras being greatly frightened were running away in panic from Narantaka. At that Sugriva addressing prince Angada said, "My boy ! Go and slay that warrior on horse back, who is devouring the Vanaras."

Thereupon, at the command of Sugriva, Angada issued forth from the army, like the sun emerging from a bank of clouds. Heroic Angada was black like a dense hill and for carrying a golden club, he looked like a mountain tinged with (shining) minerals. He was armless but his nails and teeth were his weapons. After presenting himself before Narantaka, Angada said, "What is the good of fighting with those Vanaras ? Now strike my chest with that prasa."

At that, Narantaka was inflamed with rage, he bit his lips with his teeth, and heaving a deep breath, like a python, he hurled the flaming Prasa against Angada's breast. The Prasa fell into pieces coming in contact with the adamantine breast of Angada. Then Angada seeing that Prasa weapon thus frustrated, dealt a severe slap on the head of Narantaka's charger. By that slap the head of the steed was smashed, its eyes came out of

their sockets and its legs entered deep in the earth. Narantak was greatly enraged seeing his horse thus destroyed and dealt a heavy fist blow on Angada's head. Angada was greatly pained and he began to vomit hot blood. He was stunned, but recovering his consciousness, he dealt a fatal blow on Narantaka's chest. His ribs were broken and blood came out from the mouth. Narantaka fell dead like a thunder-struck mountain. The gods were greatly delighted at the destruction of Narantaka and the Vanaras clamoured in joy and Ram too was much astonished at this heroic feat and got himself ready for battle.

CHAPTER XLVIII

OTHER CAPTAINS' DEATH

Seeing Narantaka thus slain, heroic Devantaka, Trimurdha and Mahodara began to roar in rage. Mahodara was on the back of a huge elephant. He rushed towards Angada. Devantaka being furious at the death of his brother, quickly advanced with formidable Parigha against Angada. Finding the Rakshasas advancing towards him, Trishira advanced in his glittering chariot yoked with spirited steed. Angada uprooted a huge tree with its branches and hurled it against Devantaka in great violence. Thereupon, Trishira cut into pieces with a sharp mace-like arrow. Angada took up another tree. Trishira and Mahodara cut that into pieces with arrows and the Parigha.

Then heroic Trishira advanced towards Angada showering arrows on him. Mahodara in anger struck Angada on the chest with a thunder-like Tomara. Devantaka having struck Angada with a Parigha soon disappeared from the spot. But heroic Angada, though attacked simultaneously by several Rakshasas, was not a bit unnerved. Then Angada dealt a severe slap on the head of Mahodara's elephant and the elephant at

once breathed its last. Angada then plucked a huge tusk of the elephant and struck Devantaka with it. Devantaka reeled under that blow like a tree tossed by the wind, and blood began to flow in stream. Devantaka, however, regained his consciousness with great difficulty and struck Angada with great violence by a Parigha. Angada fell unconscious by contracting his knees. But he soon recovered and stood up for fight. At the time of standing up, Trishira pierced his forehead with arrows and set up a heroic roar. At that time, heroic Hanuman and Neela seeing Angada thus surrounded by the Rakahasas, advanced towards him. Neela hurled a mountain peak at Trishira, who cut it into pieces with three shafts. The rock at once fell on the ground by emitting light and sparks. Then, formidable Devantaka rushed towards Hanuman with a Parigha in his hand. Hanuman too frightened the Rakshasas by a terrific roar and hit Devantaka on his head with a thunder-like fist blow. Devantaka's eyes came out of their sockets, his tongue protruded from his mouth and he at once gave up his ghost.

Thereupon, Trishira being much angry, struck Neela on the breast with arrow in great fury. Mahodara again got upon a mountain like elephant and advanced by illuminating the battle-field with his effulgence, like the sun mounted upon the Mandara Hill, and began to shower volleys of arrows upon Neela in rage. It seemed as if clouds were incessantly raining over a hill. General Neela was wounded by his arrows. He grew inert and listless; then he again plucked a huge rock and hit Mahodara on the head. Mahodara was smashed by that blow and fell like a cliff cleft by thunder. His elephant too was destroyed with him.

Then Trishira seeing his uncle slain by Neela, pierced Hanuman with sharp arrows in rage. Hanuman in fury hurled rocks against him. Trishira too cut that into pieces by his sharp arrows, then Hanuman finding the rock, hurled by him, thus being frustrated, in great violence threw a big tree against Trishira.

Trishira cut that in its course through the air and roared in fury. Then as a lion tears up an elephant, so Hanuman tore Trishira's horse by his nails. Heroic Trishira hurled a formidable Shakti, fatal as Death against Hanuman in anger. Hanuman took up that Shakti, like a burning meteor in the sky, and broke it into two. The Vanaras seeing that terrible Shakti thus broken into two roared in delight. Then Trishira struck Hanuman with a sword on the chest, Hanuman too dealt a slap on Trishira's breast. Trishira at once fell unconscious. In the meantime Hanuman snatched away the sword from Trishira and frightened the Rakshasas by his roars. Trishira could not stand that roar, he stood up and dealt a severe fist blow to Hanuman. Hanuman's anger was inflamed and he caught Trishira by his neck and severed his head adorned with crown and ear-rings, as Indra, in the days of yore, cut the head of Viswarupa, the son of Viswakarma. The head of that Rakshasa fell on the ground, like a burning planet on the earth. At that sight the Vanaras set up a heroic roar. The earth shook with that and the Rakshasas ran away in great fear. Then heroic Matta, seeing Devantaka and others thus slain, took up a huge club in rage. That iron mace was glittering with plated gold, stained with blood, and was adorned with a red garland. A fierce glow constantly emitted from its end. At this sight even Superelephants, as Mahapadma, Sarvabhauma and Airavata trembled. The infuriated warrior taking up that formidable mace flared up in rage like the Doomsday fire and rushed towards the Vanaras in great speed.

In the meantime, the Kapi-chief, Rishabha came forward to meet Matta. Matta hurled that thunderbolt-like mace against Rishabha's breast. Rishabha's chest was pierced. His whole body reeled under that blow and he began to bleed profusely. Rishabha regained his consciousness after a long time, and stared repeatedly at Matta, with his lips quivering in anger.

Then he dealt a violent fist blow at Matta's chest. Matta became covered with blood and at once fell down like a cut down tree,

In the meantime. Rishabha taking up that fatal mace from Matta's hand began to yell in war-delight. Heroic Matta was red like the evening cloud. He was stupified only for a moment in pain, then regaining his consciousness, he began to strike Rishabha repeatedly. Rishabha fell unconscious and after coming to his senses Rishabha struck Matta on his head with that dreadful mace. By that fatal blow the chest of Matta was smashed, and blood flowed like a stream of molten minerals from a hill. In the meantime, Rishabha rushed towards the Rakshasa army with that mace in his hand, and began to destroy them by whirling it again and again. Matta was pounded by that blow of the mace. He fell dead like a peak smitten by thunder. Then the Rakshasa army ran away in fear of their lives.

CHAPTER XLIX.

ATIKAYA'S FIGHT.

Then, Atikaya, the subduer of pride of the Devas and the Danavas, seeing his brothers, mighty like Indra, fallen on the field of battle and finding his uncles Mahodara and Matta dead and the Rakshasa troops dispersed in fear, became exceedingly angry. He got upon an exceedingly glittering chariot and rushed towards the Vanaras. He had fine ear rings on his ears and a great bow in his hand. He began to roar by giving out his name repeatedly. That hero brandishing his bow frightened the Vanaras greatly. The Vanaras thinking him to be Kumbhakarna, on account of his huge body, sought one another's protection. Atikaya looked as formidable as Vishnu, when as a Dwarf he was about to cover the three worlds by his feet. The Vanaras ran away at his very sight, and sought protection of Ram, the shelter of the refugee.

Ram removed their fear by his assurances and saw huge Atikaya seated on an excellent car and roaring like a dark thundering cloud. He was greatly astonished by his sight and questioned Vibhishan about him.

"O Rakshasa lord ! Who is he that is advancing in a chariot glittering as the sun and yoked with a thousand steeds ? Who is that hero whose look is like that of a lion, whose body is like that of a mountain ; who carries a formidable bow in his hand, who being surrounded by various sorts of weapons like Prashas Tomaras etc. looks like God Rudra surrounded by goblins ? Who is he that is equipped with fatal-edged Shakti and looks like a cloud with lightning ; whose gold plated bow is adorning the chariot as a rain-bow beautifies the sky ; whose flag and staff bear royal insignia whose bow is beautiful like the rainbow resting against a bank of clouds ; whose chariot is decorated with flags and staffs, and is driven by four charioteers with a deep rumbling noise like that of a (distant) cloud and where there are thirty eight bows and quivers full of dreadful arrows ; two swords each ten cubits long and furnished with handles four cubits in length. Who is he that wears a red garland on his neck, whose countenance is dreadful like Death ; who is of black colour, who is emitting an effulgence like the sun free from clouds ; whose arms are protected with golden arm-lets, and for them looks like the Himalayas, whose dreadful face being adorned with fine earrings looks like the full moon in the midst of the Punarvasu stars, and at whose sight the Vanaras are running away in fear ?"

Vibhishan replied, "Ram ! He is the son of the Rakshasa king, in prowess he is like his father and his name is Atikaya. He is versed in all the Shastras and he is obedient to the aged. He is a skilful rider, can also ride elephants, and is expert in the use of sword and bow. He has also efficiency in polity. In short, relying on his prowess, the city of Lanka rests free from fear. Queen Dhanyamalini is the mother of this great hero. He has propitiated Brahma by his penance, and on account of weapons received from Brahma

as his boons, he is invincible of the Gods and the Asuras. He has obtained by his penance excellent armours and chariot. Danavas owe their defeat to him. He protected the Rakshasas and destroyed the Yakshas. Once he even frustrated Indra's thunderbolt and Varuna's Pasha by his arms. Soon get ready to destroy that hero, for he will immediately begin to route the Vanara army."

Then heroic Atikaya, entering amongst the Vanaras began to roar repeatedly by brandishing his bow. In the meantime, Kumad, Dvidida, Mainda, Neela, and Sharabha seeing that dreadful Rakshasa, rushed forward with trees and stones. Atikaya cut down those trees and stones with his arrows and began to pierce them with iron shafts. They were defeated by Atikaya and they were quite helpless for revenge. Then as a young lion frightens the deer herd, so Atikaya frightened the Vanara troops, but he never struck any one amongst his enemies who was unwilling to fight. Then that hero advancing towards Ram proudly said, Just see I am upon a chariot with a bow in my hand, I donot like to fight against the weaklings who are afraid of their lives. Let them alone who are strong and possess enthusiasm for battle, fight against me."

Thereupon, Lakshman approached Atikaya in anger took up his bow with a cheerful countenance. Then taking a shaft from the quiver he began to twang his bow repeatedly before Atikaya. The sound of the twanging of his bow filled the earth and the sky. The Rakshasas were greatly alarmed by that.

Mighty Atikaya was greatly astonished at the sound of that twanging, and seeing Lakshman about to fight, spoke forth in rage.

Lakshman ! Thou art a boy, you have no knowlege of real heroism. Go away, why do you wish to fight against such a fatal enemy like Death ? The Himalayas and the earth could not resist my arrows. Why do you wish to-provoke a smouldering fire ? Go away leaving

aside your bow. Don't lose thy life at my hand. But I find you to be of haughty nature and you don't wish to go back. So now be despatched to the realm of death. My sharp arrows are like the trident of Rudra the God of gods, and they are the vanquisher of the pride of the enemies. You will immediately feel its effect. As the angry lion sucks blood of the elephant, so this snake-like arrow will, in no time, drink your blood."

Then heroic Lakshman hearing these proud words of Atikaya, said, "O Rakshasa! you can't be great only by words, one can never be good by self-praise. Here do I stand before thee with bow in hand, prove your prowess to me. Don't brag in vain, but show your might by act. He who has valour is a hero. Just show your prowess by any means you like, then I shall sever thy head by arrows as the wind knocks down a ripe palm by its force. This arrow of mine will drink blood from the wound it will cause. Don't slight me thinking me to be a mere boy. Consider me as Death personified whether I be young or old.

"Lord Vishnu covered the three worlds even assuming the form of a dwarf."

When the two warriors were thus banding words between them, the gods, Vidyadharas and Guhyakas waited to witness the fight.

Then Atikaya being greatly enraged at Lakshman's words, fixed an arrow to his bow and discharged it with great force. Lakshman cut off that snake-like shaft with a crescent-shaped arrow. Atikaya seeing his arrow frustrated like a cut off snake, discharged another five arrows in great anger. Lakshman again cut down those arrows, and sent off a flaming shaft against Atikaya. It struck on his forehead and it looked like a snake half-entered into a hill. Atikaya then shook with pain, like the fate of Tripura Asura struck by Rudra's shafts.

Afterwards recovering himself a little, Atikaya

said, "Lakshman! you have sent off an irresistible arrow, you are a praise-worthy adversary." Thus saying Atikaya took his seat in front of his chariot and took five or seven arrows and discharged against Lakshman. The arrows in their course lighted up the sky, but Lakshman did not grow nervous, and without any haste coolly cut down those shafts into pieces.

Then Atikaya seeing his arrows thus frustrated discharged another shaft towards Lakshman. That arrow pierced Lakshman's breast and blood came out of it, as drops of exudation come out from the temple of an elephant.

Lakshman after recovering himself a little, took up a fire-arm and charmed it with Mantras. The bow and the arrow became luminous with its glow. At that time, Atikaya aimed a dreadful fire-arm at Lakshman. Lakshman too discharged that fierce weapon against Atikaya. Both those arms were glowing with fire and they fell down burning each other in the sky. Those two shafts though formerly glowing with fire, but having clashed against each other, were reduced to ashes and their fire was extinguished.

At this, Atikaya in wrath threw Aishika arm at Lakshman. Lakshman prevented it by Aindra weapon. On Aishika arm being thus frustrated, Atikaya discharged Varuna weapon at Lakshman, Lakshman prevented it by the Vayuvya weapon. Then Lakshman in anger discharged volleys of arrows upon Atikaya as showers of rain. But all those broke-down coming in contact with Atikaya's armour wrought in diamonds. Heroic Lakshman thus finding his arrows frustrated again discharged volleys of arrows against Atikaya. Atikaya, however, was covered with an armour, so those arrows could not hurt him in any way.

In the meantime, Vayu approaching Lakshman said, "O, hero! Atikaya is covered with an impenetrable armour which he has obtained as a boon from Brahma, so pierce him with a Brahma weapon, without that there is no other means of destroying him. If this

warrior is protected by that armour, he can't be destroyed by any weapon."

Thereupon, Lakshman mighty as Indra, took up a terrible Brahma weapon. When he aimed that Brahma weapon, it agitated the sun, the moon and the planets, and the earth shook, as if, in an earth-quake. Lakshman fixed that fatal Brahma weapon to his bow and hurled it like thunder against Atikaya. The Brahma weapon was wrought in diamond, and it made its way along the sky having its velocity increased in its course. Then Atikaya seeing that Brahma weapon coming towards him tried to prevent it by sharp arrows, but it flew towards him like the bird Garura.

Atikaya in order to thwart that weapon, threw with all his might Shakti, lance, Rishti, axe and mace. But all those were baffled by that weapon and it severed Atikaya's head adorned with crown. Atikaya's head at once fell on the ground like a peak of the Himalayas. His ornaments and dress lay scattered and the Rakshasas were greatly pained at the sight of Atikaya's fall. They began to clamour in fear and pain and ran towards Lanka. The faces of the Vanara troops became lighted with joy like the blooming lotus, and they began to praise Lakshman loudly at the death of formidable Atikaya.

CHAPTER L

ENCOURAGED BY INDRAJIT

Ravan, the Rakshasa king, hearing of Atikaya's death was smitten with grief and addressing the Rakshasas said, "O Rakshasas! Dhumraksha, Prahasta, Kumbhakarna and others were invincible heroes. They were huge, strong and versed in arms, but Ram has destroyed them and other Rakshasa heroes. That day, famous Indrajit bound them with divine arms. The gods, Asuras, Yakshas and the Uragas even can not untie that

bondage. But I know not how those two heroes liberated themselves from that bondage whether by magic or by strength. Those Rakshasas that were sent by me to battle, have been destroyed by the Vanaras. To tell the truth, there is no hero now who can by his prowess destroy Ram, Lakshman, Sugriva and Vibhishan. How mighty is Ram? How irresistible are his weapons that Rakshasas have fallen by his hands! Now let sentries carefully guard Lanka and the Ashoka forest where Janaki lives surrounded by the Rakshasis. After this entry and exit of every body must be carefully reported. Go and lie in ambush with your armies where there are shrubs and groves. You must always watch the movements of the adversaries in the morning, evening and at night. Indifference about it is not at all advisable. Whether the enemy is full of preparations or advancing or are stationed in their former place must always be carefully observed".

Thereupon, the Rakshasas commenced their work according to the directions of Ravan, Ravan too with a sorrow-stricken heart entered his palace. The fire of his wrath was-kindled again and he began to brood over the death of his sons heaving deep sighs off and on.

Then the surviving Rakshasas soon appearing before Ravan said, "O Lord! Devantaka and other warriors have fallen on the field of battle."

At this news, the eyes of Ravan became bedewed with tears, and he became extremely agitated thinking of the destruction of his sons and brother.

In the meantime, great Indrajit seeing Ravan thus plunged in grief said, "Father! Why are you so sad and anxious so long Indrajit is alive. There is none who can survive in my fight. You wait and will see Ram and Lakshman dead, torn by my arrows. Relying on my valour as well as upon my lucks I take my vow that I shall destroy Ram and Lakshman by my irresistible arrows."

"To-day, Indra, Yama, Vishnu, Rudra, Sadhya,

Vaishwanara, Chandra and Surjya will witness my valour as once displayed by Vishnu. in the form of a dwarf, in the sacrifice of Vali."

After assuring Ravan with bold words, the great hero, Indrajit, ascended his car. His chariot was full of weapons, yoked with asses, and in speed, it was like the wind. Getting upon this excellent car Indrajit cheerfully proceeded for battle. A large number of soldiers followed him with bows and arrows in hands. Amongst them some were seated upon elephants; some on horses; some on tigers; some on scorpions; some on cats; some on asses; some on camels; some on snakes; some on boars; some on lions! some on jackals, huge as hills; some on crows; some on ducks; and some others on pea-cocks. All those mighty warriors were equipped with Prashas, maces, swords, clubs and axes. Indrajit moved with all these in violent speed. Trumpets and conchshells sounded loud. A moon-white umbrella spread over Indrajit's head, as the full moon shines in the sky. On his either sides white chowris with gold handles were being waved. As the firmament looks bright with the sun, so the city of Lanka shone by the presence of this matchless warrior.

On arriving at the field of battle. Indrajit stationed the Rakshasas on all sides. The name of that place was Nikumbhila. Reaching there, Indrajit commenced a sacrifice for victory. He began to propitiate the God of fire duly by offering incense, wreathes of flowers and offerings of fried rice, and by chanting mantras. Arrows served for Kusha grass and a deep iron ladle was laid; the barks of Vibhitaka tree served for fig twigs and robes were dyed red to make meat preparations for the sacrifice.¹ After lighting the sacrificial fire, Indrajit siezed a black goat by its throat. As

¹ For success in an undertaking, as victory in battle, sacrificial rites were often performed by the Vedic Hindus, and various offerings were thrown into sacrificial fire. Here some details have been given.

soon as that goat was thrown as an offering into fire, its smokeless glare spread on all sides, and omens of victory gradually appeared. The God of fire himself rose in his image of shining gold and accepted the offerings by spreading out his hands. He again obtained Brahma weapons granted by Brahma. He then sanctified by that heavenly weapon and sacred Mantras his chariot and bow. The whole firmament with the sun, the moon and the planets shook, when he invoked the presiding deity of the Brahma weapons, by casting offerings to the sacrificial fire.

Indrajit then vanished in the sky with his bow, arrows, lance, and sword along with his chariot yoked with horses.

CHAPTER LI.

THE VICTORY OF INDRAJIT.

Afterwards, the Rakshasa army carrying flags and staffs commenced a heavy fighting and began to strike the Vanaras with Tomaras, goads and wonderful shafts.

Casting his eyes upon the Rakshasa troops Indrajit said, "fight bravely for the destruction of the Vanaras." Thereupon, the Rakshasas with great enthusiasm began to strike the Vanaras vigorously, and Indrajit over their head began to spread havoc amongst Vanara army by his irresistible arms. The Vanaras began to throw trees and stones incessantly at him. Indrajit in anger began to rout the Vanara troops. At that, the Rakshasas were extremely delighted, and each and every shaft of Indrajit took a number of Vanaras as its toll. Thus the defeated Vanaras began to disperse in fear and gave up all desire for a fight. They fell in hosts like the Asuras in the war with the gods. Indrajit was like the glowing sun and his arrows were its rays!

The Vanaras made another desperate attempt, but

they were soon routed and began to fall back in fear. Then they began to fight for Ram with their all possible might, and began to throw heavy stones at him. But victorious Indrajit easily prevented those dangerous volleys of stones and scattered them by his sharp arrows. His fiery shafts like snakes began to smother the Vanaras. Indrajit then pierced Gandhamadan with eighteen arrows and Nala with nine, Mainda with seven sharp arrows, Gaja with five, Jamvuvan and Neela with ten. He then fatally struck with formidable shafts, obtained by way of boon. Sugriva, Rishabha, Angada and Divida. They remained as dead. Then flaring up in wrath like the Doomsday fire, Indrajit began to destroy the Vanaras with his dreadful arms, and was delighted seeing the Vanaras dispersing in fear with their bodies streaming in blood. Then, after smothering the Vanaras for sometime with his formidable arms, Indrajit again vanished in the sky and began to shower arrows upon the vanaras as the clouds pour forth rains. The huge Vanaras thus being molested by his arrows began to shriek in agony and pain, and they fell like thunder-smitten cliffs on the ground. At that time only his sharp shafts were seen but none could see Indrajit hidden by the spell of magic.

Then Indrajit covered the face of the sky with his formidable shafts and began to shower various arms like drops of fire on the heads of the Vanaras. The Vanaras with their bodies bathed in blood, looked like so many Kinsuka trees in blossoms. At that who looked up his eyes were pierced. The Vanaras clasped each other in fear of their lives and some saved themselves by lying prostrate on the ground. Indrajit by his arms wounded Hanuman, Sugriva, Angada, Gandhamadan, Jamvuvan, Sushena, Swift Mainda, Dvidida, Neela, Gavaksha, Gavaya, Kesheri Vidyut-dranstra, Surjyanana, Dadhimukha, Pavaksha, Nala and Kumuda. After thus vanquishing the Vanara leaders, Indrajit began to shower his shafts upon Ram and Lakshman. Then Ram seeing Indrajit's incessant

volleys of arrows falling like showers of rain after surveying every thing carefully, turned to Lakshman and said, "My boy ! Indrajit after destroying the army by his magic is now discharging his arrows at us. This hero is proud of the boon obtained from Brahma, his formidable self is now invisible, so it is not possible to kill him now. It is his weapon whose virtues and powers are unthinkable, this weapon is got from that Selfborn Divinity who is the creator and destroyer of the universe. O, intelligent one ! Bear it this day by thinking of that great God along with me. Let the formidable hero, Indrajit cover us with his shafts. The Vanara army already appears very poor. Let us now lie inert, like senseless things, on earth. Seeing us in this plight, Indrajit will surely return to Lanka being assured of his victory.

Then Ram and Lakshman were smothered by the arrows of Indrajit. Seeing them thus, humbled and cast into grief Indrajit roared in delight, and went back to Lanka, protected by Ravan, greeted with the praises of the Rakshasas and cheerfully narrated everything before his father.

CHAPTER LII.

VIBHISHANS-ADVICE.

Seeing Ram and Lakshman thus lying inert and the Vanara army lying senseless, wise Vibhishan said, "O heroes, Don't be afraid. There is no cause of grief or despair, worshipful Ram and Lakshman are lying on the ground out of respect towards Divine Brahma. It is through His blessings that Indrajit has obtained such irresistible arrows. Ram and Lakshman out of their respect towards that weapon have fallen prostrate on the ground and lying inert as dead. So you have no cause for grief."

Then intelligent Hanuman honouring the Brahma

weapon said to Vibhishan "O Rakshasa-chief ! These mighty Vanaras have been slain by the Brahma weapon. Let us now encourage the fainting ones."

Then those two heroes in that night began to roam over the field of battle with torches in their hands. They found the battle-field covered with arms and the dead bodies of the huge Vanaras. Of the Vanaras, tails of some, hands of some, thighs of some, legs of some and necks of some were severed. Blood was flowing in stream from their bodies and some of them wreathed in fear. Heroic Sugriva, Anagda, Neel, Gandhamadhan, Sushena, Mainda Begodarshi, Nala, Jyotirmukha. Dvidida were lying like dead bodies on the field of battle. Indrajit by his Brahma weapon had slain sixty seven hundred millions of Vanaras.

Vibhishana seeing the Vanara army, vast as an outstretched expanse of the sea, in that distressed condition, began to search for Jamvuvan, the Riksha¹ king. Jamvuvan had grown old in due course of nature. Being struck with arrows, he lay like a steady flame of fire. Having espied him, Vibhishana approached him, and said.

"O worshipful one ' Art thou alive ?"

Then Jamvuvan with great difficulty answered.

"Vibhishan ! I have recognised you only by your voice. I have been smitten with arrows. I can't see you with my eyes. Let me ask you one thing, is Hanuman, the pride of Anjana, and of the wind god alive ?"

Vibhisan said, 'O, Riksha chief ! Why do you ask about Hanuman without enquiring about worshipful Ram and Laksbman ? Such love and affection which you now show towards Hanuman have not been shown by Sugriva, Angada towards Ram."

Thereupon, Jamvuvan said, "Listen to me, why I have enquired about Hanuman, If that great hero be

1. Riksha means a bear.

alive, then even if our army be wholly destroyed yet I shall reckon them to be living, but if he is dead then if our army be living still I would consider them dead, to speak the truth, our lives and hopes depend upon that great hero, who is swift as wind and mighty as fire."

Then Hanuman came near old Jamvuvan and respectfully bowed down to him. At that time, Jamvuvan was in great affliction and pain, he seemed to revive at his words, and said, "My boy! come and save the Vanaras. Thou art their greatest friend and there is no greater hero than you. Now, the time has come to display your prowess and I find nobody else who can stand in this critical juncture. Just restore the Vanaras and the Bhallukas to their lives. Ram and Lakshman are lying half dead, now draw out the shafts that have stuck deep into them. My boy! Just hie to the distant Himalayas, coursing over the sea. After that, you will come across the Rishabha mountain, full of fierce animals whence you will find the Kailash mountain. Between these two mountain there stands the mountain of medicines full of medicinal plants."

"You will find there on its peak, Mritasanjivani Visalyakarani, Suvarnakarani and Sandhani, these four kinds of medicinal herbs. Those shining medicinal, herbs, you will find, have illumined the surroundings by their halo of effulgent energy. Come back soon with those four kinds of medicinal plants and soon restore the Vanaras to their lives."

Thereupon, the great hero, Hanuman, hearing these words of Jamvuvan, debated within, and his mind was agitated as the ocean is heaved up by the wind. He ascended the Trikura hill and stood like a peak upon the Trikuta hill. The Trikuta bent down under the pressure of his feet. By the force of Hanuman's flight the mountain trees fell in number and by their friction a fire was generated. The peaks fell scattered, and masses of rocks were pounded into dusts and the whole mountain began to shake. Then the Vanaras could no longer remain on that hill. The

houses and the citygates of Lanka was going through a (weird) dance. In that night, all creatures were overwhelmed with fear, and the earth with its oceans began to toss. Heroic Hanuman by gaping wide his flaming, horse-like mouth began to roar and the Rakshasas lay inert from fear. Hanuman got himself ready for the work of Ram after bowing down to the ocean. By throwing up his snake-like tail, by lowering his back, he contracted his ears, and by opening wide his mouth, gave a mighty spring in the sky. By the force of his flight, trees, stones and small monkeys that were on the hill were raised up and fell into the sea. Heroic Hanuman with meteoric speed flew through the sky outspreading his arms. The sea became agitated with all its animals. Hanuman proceeded in great speed like the disc flung by Vishnu's hand. He, in the course of flight, passed over streams, lakes, hills, forests, villages and cities. He never felt tired and flew like the bird Garuda by filling different quarters with the deep noise of his flight. He saw from distance the Himalayas, with its sounding catarracts, woody caves, snowy cliffs and dense rows of trees. Hanuman crossed the Himalayas with the speed of the wind. He found many sacred hermitages standing upon the mountain. He found there different places as the Brahmashira, silvery spots, the place where standing God Rudra discharged his shaft, the abode of Indra, Hayagriva region, Yamakinkara place, the place of fire, the region of Kuvera, the meeting place of the flaming Sun the Brahma spot, and the navel of the earth.

Hanuman espied the foremost of Mountains the Kailash, the spot of meditation of God Rudra, and of the great Bull and the golden mountain of medicines, full of luminous medicinal herbs. He was greatly astonished at the sight of the Mountain of medicines flaming like a column of fire, and springing upon it, he began to look for the medicines. Hanuman crossed thousands of Yoganas in the mountain of medicines. In the meantime, the medicines finding one looking for

them, suddenly disappeared from sight. Then Hanuman grew, exceedingly angry and his eyes began to glow like fire. With a deep roar he said, "O mountain! Why don't you show favour and sympathy to Ram? What is the cause of this slight towards him? I shall immediately punish you for this misconduct. You will instantly find yourself scattered by the prowess of my arms."

Saying this, Hanuman violently plucked a mountain peak. That peak was covered with woods, tinged with gold and other minerals, and its crown was luminous. Its stones fell in different directions and herd of elephants were roaming over it. Hanuman taking that peak, to the great panic of Indra and other gods, rose up in the sky. The denizens of the sky being astonished at this heroic feat of Hanuman began to praise him loudly. He flew like Garura. The luminous peak in his hand, was incapable of being gazed upon like the glowing sun. At that time, he looked like another sun by the side of the sun! As God Vishnu shines in heaven by holding his disc, luminous with intense rays, so that tall hero appeared with that cliff in his hand. The Vanaras clamoured in delight having espied him from distance.

Hanuman too at the sight of the Vanaras began to roar repeatedly. Thereupon, the Rakshasas of Lanka roared back in thundering noise.

In no time Hanuman flighted upon Lanka and after greeting the chiefs of the Vanaras he embraced Vibhishan.

At the very smell of the medicines, Ram and Lakshman were perfectly cured and other Vanaras too gradually came round and stood upon their legs. As people rise from their sleep in the morning, so they rose from their stupor.

The Rakshasas, however, could not be revived, for all the Rakshasas that were slain, were thrown into the sea at the command of Ravan, lest their number might be counted.

Then, Hanuman again took back the mountain of medicines to the Himalayas and placed it in the proper place and returned back.

CHAPTER LIII

LANKA IN FLAMES

After that, Sugriva, the Kapi king, deciding a course of action, addressing Hanuman said, "O hero! Since Kumbhakarna and other princes have been slain, I do not know how Ravan will defend Lanka any more? Let the strong and courageous Vanaras from our side fall upon Lanka with burning torches."

The sun went down, and in the dark evening, the Vanaras proceeded towards Lanka with torches in hand.

The un-even eyed Rakshasas that were guarding the city gates of Lanka, took to their heels at the sight of those formidable Vanaras proceeding with lighted torches in their hands. The Vanaras, then in delight, set fire to the city-gates, upper houses, to all the high roads and narrow lanes, and to the palaces. In no time, the fire was ablaze and it put forth its cruel tongues in all directions. High palaces began to burn and crumble into pieces. Aguru, fine sandal, pearls, polished gems, diamonds, and corals all were reduced to ashes. All kinds of clothes spun from flax, silk, and lambs' wool, golden vessels, excellent harness, elephant's gear, armours of the warriors, protecting covers of the elephants and horses, various kinds of arms, hairy blankets, chowris, tiger's skin, musk, sacrificial rooms, bedsteads, household furniture and everything were burnt to ashes.

The Rakshasas were clad in golden armours, they wore garlands and had put on excellent dress; they were walking fast in staggering gait under the influence of wine, and their wives in fear followed them clinging by the ends of their clothes.

The wrath of the Rakshasas became kindled at this

sudden act of arson by the Vanaras, and they came out with swords, lances and axes in their hands. Some were taking their meals, some were drinking, and some were happily asleep on fine beds with their wives, finding themselves hemmed in on all sides by fire, they came out in great alarm, holding young children by their arms. Everything was in blaze and fire leaped in all directions. The mansions of Lanka were costly and strong-built. Some of them were like the full moon, and some were crescent-shaped, their wide chambers¹ windows and lattices were fine and wonderful, and their daises well built. Those upper chambers were made of gold and wrought with corals and gems, and in their heights, they seemed to touch the sky became echoed with the cries of startled pea-cocks and cranes. Fire began to consume those spacious rooms. The flaming city-gate looked like a cloud lit up with lightning, and the burning houses appeared like so many peaks encircled by forest-fire. In that fatal night, women that were fast asleep in seven storied palaces, being scorched by fire, threw off their ornaments and shrieked in pain. The burning houses fell with a crash like the peaks of a mountain struck down by lightning, and from distance they shone like the cliffs of the Himalayas consumed by forest fire. The roofs of the palaces were lit up with cruel flame. At that time, Lanka appeared like a Kinsuka tree in blossoms. The people in fear untied the horses and elephants. At that time Lanka (with its hubbub) appeared like an ocean with sharks and crocodiles turning in a whirlpool. Somewhere, the horse bolted at the sight of an elephant, while at another place, the elephant ran away at the sight of a steed. The waters of the Ocean looked red with the glow of that mighty fire and reflections of the burning houses fell on its restless water. Lanka was thus in fire.

The cries of women enveloped in smoke and fire, could be heard from hundreds of leagues. The Rakshasas

1 It may mean spacious-arrangement for light.

who were then coming out with their burning bodies, were suddenly attacked by the Vanaras, and the air became resounded with their yells.

In the meantime, Ram and Lakshman, having their arrows removed, cheerfully took up their bows and quivers. A great noise was produced as Ram twang his bow. Ram looked like angry Rudra and the twanging of his bow drowned the clamours of the Rakshasas. The hills crumbled by his arrows. Seeing Ram's shafts penetrating into their palaces and abodes, the Rakshasas got themselves ready for battle.

In the meantime, Sugriva, gave instructions to attack the gate that lay nearest to one. "Whoever will run away is certainly disobedient to me, you must kill that wicked fellow."

Seeing the Vanaras standing with torches at the city-gate, the wrath of Ravan was fiercely kindled. The air ejected from his mouth filled all directions, and the wrath of God Rudra seemed to be mirrored on his countenance.

Then calling Kumbha and Nikumbha sons of Kumbhakarna near him, said, "My boys! Proceed with a big army to the field of battle."

At this, Kumbha and Nikumbha started for fight. Yupaksha, Shonitasha, Prajangha, and Kampana followed them. Ravan set up a heroic roar and said, "Rakshasas! Go and fight at night."

Thereupon, the Rakshasas issued forth with shining arms. The sky became lit up with the sheen of their ornaments and apparel and by the fiery glow of the Vanaras.

The light of the moon and the stars and the halo of the apparel of the heroes on both sides, lighted up the intervening sky between the two armies.

The Vanaras found the Rakshasa army well equipped, sufficiently provided with horses, elephants and various kinds of arms. Their zones were producing a tinkling

sound. Their bows were strung, arrows fixed to them, and the air became scented with the sweet fragrance used by them. The Rakshasas attacked the Vanaras violently, like moths leaping into flames. Vanaras began to strike them with stones, trees and fist blows. The Rakshasas began to sever their heads with sharp weapons, and the Rakshasas in their turn were being destroyed by the Vanaras some were cursing, some abusing, some bragging of their prowess, and some were challenging their antagonists. And in no time a heavy fight ensued between the two parties.

When the fight thickened, Angada approached Kampana, Kampana being enraged for the wounds received, dealt a severe slap on Angada's breast and Angada fell unconscious. But he soon recovered and hurled a peak against Kampana, Kampana died from that blow. In the meantime, Shonitaksha came near Angada and began to strike with sharp arrows, Shonitaksha hurled several kinds of sharp weapons against Angada. Angada being thus hurt fell upon Kampana destroyed his bow, arrows and the chariot. Thereupon. Kampana took up his sword and shield. Angada siezed him by a spring and snatching off his sword cut him vertically into two pieces and proceeded to another place. In the meantime, Yupaksha being greatly enraged soon came near to Angada, along with Prajangha. Shonitaksha too having recovered himself a little came there with his iron mace. Angada being stationed between Prajangha and Shonitaksha appeared like the full moon between the two Vishakha stars. Mainda and Dvidida were protecting his flanks and the Vanaras were waiting to fight the Rakshasas. The Rakshasas in fury attacked them with swords, maces and bows and arrows. The Vanaras began to hurl trees and stones against them. Prajangha cut those trees and stones into pieces and the Vanaras in their turn crushed down his chariot into atoms. Mainda and Dvidida attacked the Rakshasas in great fury, but Shonitksa frustrated their attacks.

Then Prajangha attacked Angada with a huge sword. Angada uprooted an Aswakarna tree and struck Prajangha on his wrist and the sword fell down from Prajangha's grasp. At this Prajangha dealt a severe blow like a thunder, Angada remained stunned for some time. then, recovering himself, Angada broke Prajangha's head with a tremendous fist blow.

Yupaksha seeing his uncle thus slain got down from the chariot with tearful eyes. He had no more arrows in his quiver, so he rushed with his sword. Thereupon, heroic Dvidida struck Yupaksha with a huge stone on his chest. Then a fierce fight ensued between the two. In the meantime, Shonitaksha struck Dvidida with his mace, Dvidida groaned under that blow, but finding Shonitaksha to strike again, he snatched away that mace from his hand.

In the meantime, Mainda came near Dvidida and a heavy fight ensued. Dvidida struck Shonitakska on his face and pounded him to atoms. Mainda too in fury killed Yupaksha by smashing his ribs. At that, the Rakshasa soldiers in despair ran to Kumbha.

CHAPTER LIV.

KUMBHA'S FIGHT.

Kumbha encouraged them by his assurances and found that most of the heroes had been slain by the Vanaras. Kumbha commenced a desperate fight against the Vanaras, and that great warrior, foremost of bowmen, began to tear and cut the Vanaras by his sharp arrows. He struck Dvidida with a gold plated arrow. Dvidida fell wounded by stretching apart his legs. Then Mainda struck Kumbha with a huge piece of rock, but heroic Kumbha cut that into pieces by five sharp arrows and struck Mainda with another shaft on the chest. Mainda fell unconscious from that blow.

Then, Angada seeing Dvidida and Mainda thus

worsted in the fight, rushed forwards towards Kumbha in violent speed, Kumbha wounded Angada with a number of arrows as one wounds an elephant with a goad. Angada, though wounded, was not least overcome, but he incessantly showered trees and stones on Kumbha's head. But Kumbha's arrows cut them into pieces. Angada rushed forward, but Kumbha struck him with two arrows that pierced his brows. Blood blinded his eyes. Then Angada covering his eyes with one hand, plucked a tree with the other. That tree had a number of branches. Angada rested it against his breast and cleared it of all branches and leaves. Then the Sala tree looked like the flag-staff of Indra. Angada hurled it with great violence against Kumbha, It broke Kumbha's arrows, but Kumbha in wrath struck Angada with seven sharp arrows. Angada reeled under that blow and fell unconscious on the ground.

When Angada fell and lay like a calm sea, the Vanaras in haste informed Ram about it.

Ram despatched Jamvuvan and others for the protection of Angada. The Vanaras at once arrived there with trees and stones in their hands. Jamvuvan, Sushena and Vegodarshi in wrath ran towards Kumbha. Then Kumbha prevented their advance as one checks a stream with rocks and stones. Everything was covered with arrows, and as nothing is discernable in a vast ocean, so nothing could be marked there in the field of battle.

In the meantime, Sugriva approached and ran after Kumbha as a lion goes after a wild elephant of the hill, and hurled Aswakarna and other trees against Kumbha. But Kumbha cut all of them into pieces, and the trees fell with a crash. But Sugriva was not least moved by it, nor did he mind the arrows that wounded him all over the body, but he meekly bore all. Sugriva then snatched Kumbha's bow and broke it into two, and Kumbha looked miserable like an elephant whose tusk had been broken.

Sugriva then addressing Khumbha said, "Khumbha ! Surely your prowess and the force of your arrows are wonderful. In might, thou art like Prahlad and Vali, in valour like Varuna and Kuvera. Amongst the Rakshasas, only Ravan and you possess true valour. You alone are like Kumbhakarna in strength. As mental affliction cannot overcome a person who has conquered his sense, so even the Gods cannot attack you. Now display your prowess and also witness that of mine. Your uncle, Ravan conquered the gods and the Asuras by virtue of receiving boon from heaven, and Kumbhakarna by his own might. You have both favour of the gods and prowess of your own. In bowmanship you are like great Indrajit and in might, like Ravan, the Rakshasa king. In fact, you are now foremost of the Rakshasas. This day, the world will witness the great fight between you and me as once it witnessed the great battle between Indra and Sambara Asura. You have done wonderful feat, and shown marvellous skill in the use of arms. You have slain a number of mighty Vanaras. You are now fatigued, if I kill you at this time, people will speak ill of me. In fear of that bad name I refrain from destroying you now. Take rest and then witness my prowess."

Kumbha's energy flared up by this praise of Sngriva. He encircled Sugriva with his hands. Then a fierce struggle and wrestling ensued as between two infuriated elephants. From exhaustion, they began to emit fire and smoke from their mouths. The earth and the Ocean shook under their heroic treads. Suddenly Sugriva raised Kumbha from the ground and threw him into the sea. Kumbha fell like a huge rock into the sea crushing all aquatic animals by his weight. Kumbha however soon got up from the sea and struck Sugriva with a thunderlike fist blow on the chest. Sugriva's skin was cut and his brows were bruised and blood sprouted out from his body. But Sugriva's valour was

1 Apparently breath that blows through one's mouth which usually turns into mist in a foggy weather or in deep winter.

redoubled at that blow and he dealt a thunder-like severe blow on Kumbha's chest. Kumbha fell down like an extinguished fire, and it seemed as if a flaming meteor fell on earth. Kumbha's ribs were broken, and being infested with the halo of god Rudra, he became dazzling as the sun. The earth shook when he fell and the Rakshasas were extremely frightened at his death.

CHAPTER LV

NIKUMBHA'S DEATH

Nikumbha seeing Kumbha thus fallen, rushed towards Sugriva glowing with rage. He held a formidable Parigha in his hand. Its iron handle was wrought in gold and diamonds; it was encircled with a garland of flowers and it removed the fear of the Rakshasas. It was long and was burning like fire. Nikumbha began to whirl that dreadful Parigha, uttering heroic roars all the while. His breast was protected by an excellent armour, so his other limbs were. That great hero with that Parigha appeared like a rumbling cloud adorned with the rain bow. The sky with its stars and planets and the city of Alaka seemed to spin round by the whirling of that Parigha. Nikumbha shone like the Doomsday fire. His anger was its fuel and the Parigha was its flame. At that time, that great warrior became quite inaccessible to others, and both the Vanaras and the Rakshasas stood in awe of him. In the meantime heroic Hanuman approached Nikumbha by baring his breast. Long armed, Nikumbha hurled that glittering Parigha against Hannman and it struck Hanuman on the breast, but it broke into pieces by coming in contact with that ample, adamantine chest. Its fragments flew in all directions, and they shone like meteoric showers in the sky. Hanuman remained quite unmoved at that blow. Then Hanuman struck Nikumbha with violent strength with a fist blow on his chest.

Nikumbha's armour was broken by that blow and blood sprutted out in jets, and immediately a light flashed forth and shed away, like lightning in the sky.

Then Nikumbha recovering himself a little seized Hanuman with great violence and dragged him towards Lanka, by raising him up from the ground. The Rakshasas were greatly astonished at this amazing feat and began to clamour in delight.

Then Hanuman struck Nikumbha with a fist blow and freeing himself from Nikumbha's grasp, stood upon the grounds. His wrath kindled fiercely. He threw down Nikumbha and began to press him down. Hanuman then got upon Nikumbha and pressed his throat by his hands. Nikumbha began to groan horribly. Hanuman twisted Nikumbha's neck and tore off his head. The Vanaras roared in delight and resounded the quarters with their roars. The Rakshasas were extremely terrified by that noise.

Ravan hearing of Kumbha's and Nikumbha's death burned with rage. Being overwhelmed with rage and grief, addressing Khara's son, large-eyed Makaraksha, said, "My boy! Proceed with an army at my command and come back after destroying Ram and Lakshman with the Vanara hosts.

Makaraksha, proud of his valour, bowed down to Ravan's behest and issued forth after greeting Ravan with due honours.

The commander of the army stood before him. Makaraksha told him to get the army ready without any delay, and the commander obeyed his orders instantly.

Then Makaraksha getting upon his chariot, asked the charioteer to drive him to the battle field.

Then to encourage the Rakshasas, that warrior said, "O Rakshasas fight with me. Lord Ravan has asked me to destroy Ram, Lakshman and other Vanaras, and I shall destroy them to-day. As fire

consumes dry logs of wood so I shall destroy Vanaras with my lance."

Rakshasas were well equipped and strong. They were cruel and could assume any form at their will, they were quite formidable in appearance, and had flowing locks. They were roaring like infuriated elephants. Those Rakshasa warriors followed Makaraksha in cheerful mind.

Every quarter became resounded with the notes of trumpets and the loud sounds of the conchshells. But whip slipped from the charioteer's grasp, and the horses could no longer proceed in their proud canter as before; tears rolled down their eyes and they some how dragged their legs! The wind was tainted with dusts. But Makaraksha paid no heed to these omens, nor did the Rakshasas who were black as buffaloes and elephants and bore wound of weapons on their strong bodies.

CHAPTER LVI

MAKARAKSHA'S FIGHT

Seeing Makaraksha issuing forth for battle, the Vanaras stood ready for the fight. The Vanaras held trees and stones in their hands. The Vanaras were violently attacked by the Rakshasas and they began to disperse in panic. Thereupon, heroic Ram protected the Vanaras by frustrating the shaft of the Rakshasas.

In the meantime, Makaraksha came near Ram and broke forth in anger. "Come now, Ram! I shall fight a duel with you, and shall destroy you with my sharp arrows. You killed my father, Khara, in the Dandaka forest, your sight has kindled my wrath. O villain! I am now burning with rage because at that time I could not find you there. Fortunately you have fallen within my sight, you are covetable to me as inferior animals to a hungry lion. This day, you will yourself

repair to the region where you have sent others previously in battle. Now, all will witness my prowess and your valour, fight with me with whatever weapons you like, or with mere fists if you wish.

Ram laughed at these words of garrulous Makaraksha and said, "O hero! Why do you brag in vain. In battle none can be defeated by mere words. In the Dandaka forest. I have slain fourteen thousand Rakshasas along with Khara, Dushan and Trishira. This day, I shall offer your body to the ravenous birds of prey.

At this, Makaraksha discharged a volley of sharp arrows against Ram. Ram cut down those shafts into pieces. Finding his arrows thus frustrated by Ram, Makaraksha commenced a desperate fight.

Then all the quarters became resounded with the twanging of their bows and the sky became covered with their arrows.

Ram cut down Makaraksha's bow and destroyed the chariot with its steeds. Makaraksha then jumped on the ground and raised a formidable lance against Ram. That lance was a gift from God Rudra and it could destroy the world. It glowed with its own effulgence, and the gods moved away at the sight of that terrible weapon. Makaraksha in great fury hurled that lance against Ram, but Ram cut that into pieces by four sharp shafts. At that, the denizens in heaven began to praise Ram. That golden lance fell on the ground like a burning meteor. Then Makaraksha ran toward Ram, raising his arm and saying. "Wait, just wait." Ram then smilingly discharged a fire-arm and Makaraksha fell down being wounded at the heart. Then the Rakshasas were overwhelmed with fear and the gods with joy.

CHAPTER LVII.

INDRAJIT SETS OUT.

At the news of Makaraksha's death. Ravan's wrath flared up with fierce glow. He grinded his teeth in impatient rage. Then deciding the course of action, he said to Indrajit "My Darling ! You are the mightiest warrior amongst all, now kill Ram and Lakshman by your prowess, either by remaining visible, or invisible through your magic. You have conquered even matchless Indra by your valour, whereas Ram and Lakshman are only ordinary human beings. Won't you slay them simply out of scorn ?"

Thereupon heroic Indrajit resolved to proceed to battle and in order to propitiate the God of fire he repaired first to the sacrificial ground. There the Rakshasa women with red bonnets appeared in haste, and began to make various preparations for the sacrifice. Indrajit covered the flame with offerings and took a black goat by its neck. The fire burned with an intense smokeless glow and auguries of victories became manifested in it. A golden tongue of flame received the offerings. The sacrifice for victory was complete. Indrajit after gratifying the gods and other supernatural beings made himself invisible, ascending a glittering golden car. His flag staff was made of sapphire and was encircled by a golden ring, and the flag bore the mark of the crescent moon. The chariot was yoked with four steeds.

Heroic Indrajit being equipped with various arms became quite inaccessible, and then said, "This day. I shall conquer vagrant Ram and Lakshman and confer the glory of victory on my father. and shall destroy all the Vanaras of the world to his intense delight."

Then stern Indrajit arriving at the battle field towering with rage, found heroic Ram and Lakshman

formidably stationed amongst the Vanaras like three-hooded snakes.

As soon as Indrajit recognised them he strung his bow and fixed his arrow to it.

His chariot was invisible and he discharged a volley of arrows against Ram and Lakshman. Gradually all the quarters became covered with his shafts that were being showered like rains.

Ram and Lakshman prevented them by their divine arms, but their arrows could not touch Indrajit. Indrajit was concealed behind a veil. He created by magic a screen of smoke and became quite invisible. But the twanging sound of his bow, the rumbling noise of his chariot, and the clatter of his horse's hoofs could be heard; and Indrajit in anger began to pierce Ram with his shafts received as boon. Ram and Lakshman were literally under a shower of arrows, like tropical rains. They then began to discharge their arrows which after drawing blood from Indrajit fell on the ground stained with gore. Ram and Lakshman discharged their arrows towards the direction from which the shafts of Indrajit seemed to proceed. Promptness of Ram and Lakshman were quite amazing.

Indrajit was moving about unseen and was striking Ram and Lakshman with his sharp arrows.

Heroic Ram and Lakshman soon became wounded by Indrajit's arrows. Blood flowed from their bodies and they looked like two Kinsuka trees covered with (deep crimson) blossoms. As the sun becomes invisible behind a bank of clouds, so nothing could be detected about Indrajit.

Thus a large number of Vanaras fell by his sharp shafts.

In the meantime, Lakshman said in great rage, "O worshipful lord! This day, I shall discharge the Brahma weapon for the destruction of the Rakshasa race."

Then Ram said, "My boy! It is not proper to destroy all the Rakshasas for the offence of a single individual."

"It is not proper for you to destroy them who are unwilling to fight, or hiding themselves in fear, or seeking protection with joined palms, or running away, or regaling themselves with wine. Let us now kill Indrajit. He is a great sorcerer, He is invisible on account of his magic spell. But it is possible for us to slay him though hidden from view. If he once becomes visible, the Vanaras will be able to destroy him with less efforts. If that villain now hides himself within the womb of the earth, enter the Nether region or sky, still he will surely be destroyed by my weapons."

Saying this, heroic Ram with the Vanaras tried to find out means for the destruction of cruel Indrajit.

CHAPTER LVIII.

INDRAJIT'S FIGHT.

Indrajit's eyes were red with anger at the destruction of his kinsmen. Having discerned the deep motive of Ram, he left the field of battle and entered the city by its Western Gate. On his way, he found that Ram and Lakshman had not yet ceased from fighting. Thereupon, that enemy of the gods, Indrajit, resolved to produce an illusion by magic, about the execution of Sita, and with that object he returned to the battle field. Then, the Vanaras getting sight of him began to hurl missiles of stones and trees against him.

Before others, Hanuman advanced towards Indrajit by plucking a mountain peak. On advancing, Hanuman saw Janaki on Indrajit's chariot, wearing a single braid of hair. Her face was lean with fasting, and her mind afflicted with sorrow. She was clad with a piece of dirty linen and her body was stained with dusts. Hanuman took her to be Janaki and was greatly mortified at

seeing her woes. He tried to divine Indrajit's motive. Then with other Vanaras, Hanuman rushed towards Indrajit.

Indrajit was dragging Sita by her hair, and then drew out his sword in the presence of all.

Then exquisitely beautiful magic Sita cried out, "Alack Ram, Ah, alack, Ram!"

Hanuman began to shed tears with a griefstricken heart at the sight of her sufferings. Then Hanuman angrily said to Indrajit, "Thou Villain! Thou art doomed to death for touching Janaki's hair. You are born in the line of a Brahmarishi, but still have become a Rakshasa, fie unto you. You are vicious and wicked, and have adopted crooked ways at the time of fighting. Thou shameless creature! You ought to be ashamed of killing a woman. Cruel-hearted villain! Janaki is now homeless and helpless, with what heart do you now put her to death? You are now within my powers, if you commit this foul act, you won't survive long, and you will soon reach that abominable region of the murderers of women, that are avoided even by murderers of men."

With these words, Hanuman rushed towards Indrajit. Thereupon, Indrajit said. 'Thou vile Vanara,' I shall now slay that Sita before you, Sugriva and Ram; after that, I shall destroy you, Ram, Lakshman, Sugriva and Anarya¹ Vibhishan. You have just now remarked, that it is improper to slay a woman and in reply to it, let me say that whatever is painful to an enemy is quite proper."

Saying this, Indrajit struck that magic Sita with his sharp sword. Struck by the sword beautiful Sita was cut into two transverse sections.

¹ Mark the word. Anarya means a non-Aryan i.e. despicable or low. Indrajit calls Vibhishan a "non-Aryan." certainly a non Aryan would not abuse another of his race by calling him a non Aryan. If therefore stands to reason that the Rakshasas were not non-Aryans as is usually supposed.

Then Indrajit said to Hunuman, "You Vanara! Just see. I have now put the beloved queen of Ram Sita, to death I have thus frustrated all your endeavours.

Saying this, the ranger of the sky began to roar, opening his mouth wide.

The Vanaras were standing at a short distance. They heard that heroic roar and began to cast sorrowful looks around, and began to fall back in fear,

Then Hunuman addressing the Vanaras said, "Ye warriors! Why are you running away in despair? Where hast gone your valour? See, I am now advancing forward, just follow me."

Then the Vanaras turned round and pressed forward with trees and stones in their hands, Hanuman appeared like Death himself, and began to consume the Rakshasas like fire.

That great hero overwhelmed with grief and rage, hurled a big stone at Indrajit's chariot. But at the slightest spur of the charioteer, the trained horses moved away with the chariot to some distance. The stone missed its aim and fell down crushing many Rakshasas thereby. The Rakshasas were overpowered by the Vanaras, and they began to groan in pain. Thereupon, Indrajit rushed forward and began to destroy the Vanars with his sharp weapons, and the Vanaras began to run away in fear. Then, Hunuman addressing the Vanaras said, "Comrades; it is no use to fight with the Rakshasas, since for whom we are fighting at the risk of our lives, that worshipful Janaki is dead."

"Let us now proceed and inform Ram and Sugriva about it, and we shall do what they will direct us to do." With these words Hanuman retreated with the Vanaras.

Seeing Hunuman thus retreated, wicked Indrajit went to the Nikumbhila temple for the purpose of performing a sacrifice.

CHAPTER LIX

LAKSHMAN'S ADVICE.

Here Ram hearing of a tremendous din of battle, told Januvuan, "My noble friend ! Just listen to the mighty noise of the clinging of arms perhaps Hunuman is somewhere engaged in some arduous feat, just go and help him with your army".

Thereupon, the Riksha lord with his army proceeded towards the Western gate, and saw Hunuman coming back with the Vanaras. The Vanaras were gasping for breath from exhaustion. On his way Hunuman came across Bhalluka army dark as clouds. Hunuman asked them to stop and appearing before Ram said, "O Ram ! when we were engaged in fighting, Indrajit executed Sita in our presence. We have come to inform you with a sorrowful heart."

At this cruel news, Ram fell unconscious like an uprooted tree, the Vanaras immediately came near him and began to sprinkle lotus scented water on him. Then Lakshman took him up on his arms and broke forth in sorrow.

"You are pious and saintly in character, but your piety could not protect you from series of misfortunes, hence virtue is of little use. Happiness of created beings is something tangible, since piety or virtue is not so, virtue, can not be the means of happiness. Nature is happy without any morality, so created beings can also be happy without any religion whatsoever.¹ Thus

¹ This is the eternal problem of Ethics. Problem of evil is an intensely complicated problem of Metaphysics. Here Lakshman argues like a modern positivist in whose philosophy virtue is merely an abstract idea, a mere convention. Kant says there is no logical necessity between Virtue and Happiness, but the synthetic notion is the result of the belief in God.

So says Iago, "Virtue, a fig ! It is in us that we are thus and thus."

religion can not lead to happiness. Had it been so, you could not be put into such troubles. If you maintain that vice is the cause of our sufferings, then Ravan would have been condemned to perdition and you could not have been so miserable like this. To speak the truth, seeing the happiness of the sinful and sufferings of the virtuous, the old cant that virtue leads to happiness and vice to miseries appears, now to be disproved, on the other hand vice leads, to happiness and virtues to sufferings. Or if it be true, that virtue leads to happiness and vice to pain then let the virtuous be happy and the vicious miserable. But when we find the virtuous suffering infinitely. and the vicious prospering beyond expectation, it appears that vice and virtue are idle conventions. O hero! If sin be considered to be an act, and if the sinner be destroyed by sin, then with the completion of the act, vice will be destroyed, so which is self destroyed, how can you destroy that again? Or if one is destroyed by another's act which may be considered to be the former's fate. then sin attaches to fate, but not the agent, for the agent is not in any way stained by it, for the agent is not the cause of another's death. O worshipful lord. Religion or virtue is an insensate thing, it has no reason or speech. Even if you admit its existence, how can it find out its object of revenge? In fact, if there were any religion at all, then you would not have been unhappy; since you are suffering, there is no such thing as religion or virtue. Religion is thus quite an insignificant thing and unable to achieve its end. It is weak at the time of action it must depend upon one's endeavours. It has not the least power to secure one's happiness. In my opinion, it is not at all proper to stick to that impotent religion. Further see, if virtue be a quality attained by endeavours then give up virtue or religion and take to manliness, and put forth your endeavours. O hero! If you consider truth to be religion. then king Dasarath has fallen from virtue by not redeeming his pledge for investing you with the crown, and for that he died, then why did you not

fulfil his vow?¹ Or, if industry or virtue be alone covetable, then Indra would not have performed a sacrifice after slaying Maharshi Viswapa. Infact for the destruction of the enemy, both valour and religion are necessary. Man for the attainment of their objects, pursue both of them. This is my opinion, but having renounced that religion which secures one's object of desire, you have dispensed with all religiousness. As rivers and streams have their origin in the mountain, so from endeavours² all virtue originate. All the acts of a weak purposeless³ man become scattered, and vanish like the waters of a shallow stream in summer. In truth, purpose is endeavour. Who has wealth he has friends and relations. He is a man who has wealth on earth. He who has wealth is learned, powerful, intelligent and heroic, and the most accomplished of all persons. I have just now mentioned to you the evils produced by the absence of wealth, and I can not understand, why you despised wealth by renouncing the throne. He who has wealth has necessity for virtue and desire, every thing is favourable to him. A poor man desirous of wealth can not attain wealth without industry and manliness. Pleasure, desire, pride, anger, peace and conquest of self is under the influence of wealth. The efforts of a saintly person that fail for want of wealth remain obscure like planers in a cloudy day. O hero! When you went into exile in obedience to your father's wishes the Rakshasas carried off your wife. Just arise, I shall remove by my own valour all the sufferings caused by Indrajit. Rise up please why

¹ i. e. by getting himself coronated.

² Lakshman is now shifting his point, he now argues for valour as well as for virtue.

³ In the original: all religion comes from wealth accumulated in various quarters. Here wealth or Artha seems to me to be endeavours that secure our objects of desire.

⁴ Wealth subsequent sentences show that here Artha means wealth, so "purpose is endeavour" may also be set down as wealth is power. The poet here describes the advantages of wealth in society, which is certainly out of mark in this place.

do you forget your own glory? This day, in revenge of worshipful Janaki's death, I shall reduce Lanka to ruins with all its splendour and wealth.

When Lakshman devoted to Ram was assuring the latter, there appeared Vibhishan surrounded by his four counsellors of collyrium hue. He found Ram overwhelmed with shame and remorse, lying on the lap of Lakshman, and the Vanaras were shedding tears standing round him.

Seeing Vibhishan, Lakshman said, "O Arya! Hanuman has witnessed Sita being executed by Indrajit. Worshipful Ram has swooned at that news."

Then Vibhishan, interrupting Lakshman's speech said to Ram, "O, Royal master! What Hanuman has said seems to be absurd like drying up the sea. I am fully aware of the evil intentions which Ravan bears towards Sita, and for that he will never put her to death. I repeatedly requested him to return Janaki for his own good, but he didn't pay any heed to my words. Not to speak of putting Janaki to death, nobody can see her eyes. Whom Indrajit has destroyed for which the Vanaras are overwhelmed with grief, must be "Magic Sita". This day, wicked Indrajit will perform a sacrifice at Nikumbhila for the attainment of his object of desire. God of fire, with the other gods, will appear there. If Indrajit succeeds in performing the sacrifice then he will be quite invincible in battle. His intention is to prevent the Vanaras from interfering with that sacrifice, therefore he has bewildered the Vanaras by producing this illusion. Let us now proceed with the army to Nikumbhila before he finishes the sacrifice. Ram! Don't be overwhelmed with grief just for nothing. The whole Vanara army has been dejected with sorrow at your plight. We shall now proceed with the army to Nikumbhila, send Lakshman with us. This hero will be able to interrupt Indrajit's sacrifice. If Indrajit does not succeed in performing the sacrifice, he will be slain by us. Lakshman's sharp arrows will drink his blood like a ravenous bird of prey. As Indra,

the King of gods, employs his thunder for the destruction of the enemies, so engage Lakshman for this work. O hero ! It is not proper to waste further time for the destruction of Indrajit. Whenever he can finish his sacrifice he becomes invincible, hence even the gods become afraid of their lives."

CHAPTER LX.

LAKSHMAN STARTS.

Ram heard Vibhishan's words, but on account of intense grief could not make out anything. Then after reviving himself a little, he asked Vibhishan in the presence of all, "Please repeat what you have just now said, I want to hear them again."

Thereupon, Vibhishan said, "O Ram ! I carried out your orders promptly about stationing the troops in groves and woods. Now the Vanara army has been stationed in all directions and the generals have drawn them in battle-array. You are grieving for nothing, this pains our heart, just banish your sorrow. Be energetic and cheerful. If you wish to destroy the Rakshasas and recover Janaki then listen to a word of mine. Wicked Indrajit has now repaired to Nikumbhila, let Lakshman proceed with us for the destruction of Indrajit. By the boon of Brahma the Brahmashira weapon and magic horse are within his reach. Now he has repaired with his army to Nikumbhila. If he can perform the Avichara¹ sacrifice to-day, then know it for certain that we shall all be destroyed by him. Lord Brahma, the Grandsire of creation said to him. "If on arriving at Nikumbhila you fail to complete the Avichara sacrifice, and if any body at that sacrifice attacks you with arms then your death is certain, Ram !

¹ That sacrifice by the performance of which one can accomplish the particular object of his desire. In the Rigveda itself various kinds of sacrifices have been mentioned, each one bearing a separate name.

This is what Brahma has ordained as the means of his death. Now employ heroic Lakshman for that task. If Indrajit dies by arrows, then Ravan with his friends and dependents will surely be destroyed."

Ram then replied, "O Vibhishan! I am fully aware of the magical powers of that formidable Rakshasa. I also know that Bhrahmashira weapon is within his grasp, and he can even defeat the gods and render them senseless, on account of Brahma's blessings. I also know that as the sun becomes invisible on account of heavy clouds in the sky, so Indrajit becomes invisible in his chariot."

Having said all these to Vibhishan, turning to glorious Lakshman said, "My boy! You are a great hero, go and destroy that sorcerer with heroic Hanuman, Jamvuvana and other generals. Vibhishan can direct what is illusion so he with his four counsellors will accompany you."

Thereupon mighty Lakshman in obedience to Ram's orders took up an excellent bow, and covered his body with an armour. He carried the bow in his left hand, his quiver was full of arrows, and a sword was slung from his back.

Having touched Ram's feet, Lakshman cheerfully said, "This day my shafts, discharged from bow will fall upon Lanka as the ducks and larks fall upon a tank. Surely, my arrows will pierce that formidable Rakshasa to-day."

With these words Lakshman bowed to Ram and wheeled round him, Ram blessed him for victory.

The Rakshasa chief, Vibhishan, with his four counsellors and Hanuman with thousands of Vanaras followed him. Lakshman on his way found the Bhalluka troops gathered in one place, and on advancing further he found the Rakshasa army drawn up in battle array. Till then Indrajit did not enter Nikumbhila. In order to destroy that sorcerer in the manner as predicted by Brahma, Lakshman waited there with Angada Vibhi-

shan and Hanuman. The Rakshasas were armed with various kinds of bright arms that glittered in light, and was frightful to look at. The place was densely packed with their chariots decorated with flags and staffs. And as one enters a deep forest or into the realm of darkness, so heroic Lakshman entered the line of the Rakshasa army.

In the meantime Vibhishan for the mischief of the enemy said, "O hero! the dark line of army that you find in front of you is the Rakshasa army just engage the troops against them. Let them disperse the Rakshasa army and when the Rakshasas will be scattered in different directions then Indrajit will, surely, be seen. And so long the Avichara sacrifice is not completed attack the Rakshasa army vigorously. Villainous Indrajit is the terror of the world. He is vicious, cruel and a sorcerer. O hero just compass his destruction."

Thereupon, Lakshman began to fight. The Vanaras and the Bhallukas rushed towards the Rakshasas with trees in their hands. The Rakshasas too in order to destroy them advanced with sharp weapons as swords, Tomaras, arrows and Shaktis. A heavy fight ensued between the two parties. Lanka became resounded with heroic roars. The sky was overcast with various kinds of arms and trees discharged by the two armies. The Rakshasas frightened the Vanaras by their prowess so the Vanaras in their turn caused panic to the Rakshasas.

In the meantime, Indrajit finding his army thus worsted and dejected, stood up even though the Avichara sacrifice at Nikumbhila was not completed, and issued forth in great rage through the dense row of trees at Nikumbhila. He got upon his well-furnished chariot. His colour was of Collyrium dye, his eyes were red, and he held a formidable bow and fearful arrows in his hands. At that time, that grim-looking warrior looked like Death himself. The Rakshasas seeing Indrajit again ascending his chariot mustered their courage to fight against Lakshman. A terrible fight commenced..

Hanuman struck Indrajit with a tree and began to destroy the Rakshasas in great wrath. The Rakshasas began to strike him with their arms.

Meanwhile Indrajit witnessing the great struggle between Hanuman and the Rakshasas asked his charioteer to take him where Hanuman was fighting for if he was neglected he would compass destruction of the whole Rakshasa army. The charioteer drove near Hanuman, and Indrajit began to strike him with his sharp weapons. Hanuman being thus struck by Indrajit addressing the latter said, "You fool! If you are really a hero, then fight fairly. You won't be able to escape with your life. Come, fight a duel with me. Thou art the foremost warrior amongst the Rakshasas just stand my onslaught this day."

In the meantime, Vibhishan said to Lakshman "O hero! That warrior who is the conqueror of Indra is seated on the chariot and is about to slay Hanuman. Now destroy him with a fatal shaft."

At that Lakshman began to look at mighty Indrajit repeatedly.

CHAPTER LXI.

VIBHISHAN'S TREACHERY

Then Vibhishan hurriedly proceeded with Lakshman. After going some distance Vibhishan, pointing to Lakshman the sacrificial ground of Nikumbha and a huge, dark Banyan tree, said, "Lakshman! On that spot Indrajit, after gartifying the supernatural spirits, commences his fight and, on account of that Avichara sacrifice, he becomes invisible to others. The hero has not yet reached the Banyan tree, just destroy with your flaming arrows his chariot with the charioteer and the steeds." Thereupon Lakshman stood, stretching his bow, Indrajit was seen seated in a glittering car, glowing like fire.

At the sight of that great warrior, Lakshman said, "O Rakshasa! I challenge you to battle; just fight with me."

Then Indrajit seeing Vibhishan there broke forth in stern words, "Ah, you fool! You have grown old being born in this place. You are my father's own brother; now tell me, how but being an uncle do you think of doing mischief to me, your own nephew? O, thou villainous renegade!¹ Friendship, pride in birth, feeling of brotherhood and religious sentiments do not govern thy conduct. You are no doubt the most wretched of all despicable creature, and an object of contempt amongst the noble-minded people, since you could acknowledge another's service by renouncing your own kith and kin. What a difference between serving one's own people and serving a stranger! You can't understand the great difference, because you are a fool. If a stranger be accomplished, and one's own people be without any accomplishments whatsoever, still a stranger is always a stranger and one's own people always continue to be his own. He who abandons his own party and joins another, is doomed to ruin (by the other party) after the destruction of his own party."² "O Rakshasa! How but could you display so much anxiety and cruel zeal to destroy your own people?"

Then Vibhishan replied, "O prince! Are you not aware of my nature? Then why do you waste your breath in vain? You are anything but noble. You should give up this naughtiness out of respect for your uncle. Though I am born amongst the cruel Rakshasas. I have been endowed with the prime quality of human-

¹ Indrajit reproaches Vibhishan with this treachery in noble and spirited words. Vibhishans are too plentiful in the annals of this country. But for them the history of India would have been otherwise. Indrajit calls Vibhishan a renegade who has revolted against his religion. In the Gita itself we find the noble injunction, "It is preferable to die in one's faith to embracing that of another."

² Indrajit's words should be written in letters of gold.

ity, and I never delight in any cruel deeds, nor have I any proclivity for vicious acts. Tell me, my boy, cannot a brother renounce a vicious brother? He who is vicious and unrighteous should be promptly discarded like a snake in hand. He who steals another's wealth or abducts another's wife is ever to be adandoned like a burning house. He who is engaged in stealing other's wives and properties and is always a cause of anxiety to his own people is doomed to destruction in no time."

Now, massacre of the saints, hostility with the gods, pride, illness and adverse circumstances are about to compass my brother Ravan's ruin. As clouds darken a hill, so all these evils have overcast all his noble qualities. My boy! This is the real cause of abandoning Ravan. Now this city of Lanka and Ravan will be destroyed in no time. You are naughty, reckless and young; your end is nigh. so abuse me in any manner you like. You have now been entrapped in great danger on account of the harsh expressions formerly employed towards me by you. Now it is difficult for you to reach the root of the Banyan tree. Fight this day with Lakshman and there is no escape from his hands to-day. You will perform your services to the gods,¹ reporting to the abode of death after the dissolution of your body. Display you may your prowess utmost by discharging all your formidable shafts; but never will you get back with your life in you."

At these words Indrajit grew furious. He had swords and other weapons in his hands. That Death-like hero got upon a well-decoratad chariot yoked with black steeds, and, taking a strong formidable bow in his hand, he espied heroic Lakshman mounted on the back of Hanuman like the sun risen on the summit of the Udaya hill (the mountain of dawn).

At their sight Indrajit angrily said, "Witness my prowess to-day. Bear my shafts that will be poured upon you like incessant rain from the clouds. I shall

1 i. e. the sacrifice.

consume you all with my flaming arrows as fire reduces cotton to ashes. I shall despatch you all to the abode of death with my lance, swords, arrows, Shaktis and other arms. When I shall set about fighting who amongst you will be able to stand my quick shafts and heroic roars like the rumbling of clouds? O Lakshman! Don't you remember that in that night-attack you two brothers along with other warriors who were your assistants fell unconscious when struck with my sharp arrows? I am like an angry serpent. Since you are engaged in fighting with me, you will surely meet with death."

Then Lakshman boldly replied, "What you think so easy in words is really difficult in execution. He is intelligent who can achieve his end by his efforts. But thou art a fool. In what is extremely arduous to attain you think yourself successful simply by your words. What you did, remaining concealed in the sky, is not the way with a hero, but with a thief. Now do I stand before thee; just witness my prowess. What is the good of idle vauntings?"

Thereupon, the heroic Indrajit stretched his bow and discharged sharp arrows at Lakshman. Those shafts deadly as venomous snakes struck Lakshman with a hissing sound. Lakshman being deeply wounded and being gory all over his body looked like a smokeless column of fire.

Then Indrajit gloating over this heroic deed of his, addressing Lakshman, said, "You Lakshman! These fatal arrows this day will rob you of your life. Vultures and eagles will feed upon your body. You are mean and are the worst of the Kshatriyas. You are devoted to the villainous Rama. He will find you killed this day by my arrows. He will to-day witness your head severed, armour battered, and the bow slipped of your hand."

Thereupon, Lakshman angrily replied. "You bragging fool! Why do you waste your breath in vain! prove your valour by your deeds. Without displaying your prowess in action why do you brag of your ownself

Now perform any such thing that I can take your words to be true. O Rakshasa! Just see that without using any harsh expressions towards you and bragging, I shall slay you even now."

Saying this, the heroic Lakshman discharged five arrows with great force at Indrajit's breast. Those shafts like fiery snakes fell upon Indrajit's breast and began to glow like the rays of the sun. At this Indrajit grew highly enraged and struck Lakshman with three sharp arrows.

Being anxious for victory, they commenced a fierce battle. They were like two planets (closing against each other) in the sky, like Indra and Vritrasura and like two lions in the forest, fighting a deadly fight against each other.

Then Lakshman breathed heavily in anger like a snake and discharged arrows against Indrajit. Indrajit was greatly alarmed by the twanging of Lakshman's bow his face pale and stared rapidly towards him. seeing Lakshman in that condition, Vibbishan said, "O hero! I find Indrajit's face to be darkened and other evil omens too. His end must be near. Be prompt in his destruction."

Thereupon the heroic Lakshman began to shoot sharp arrows at Indrajit. Indrajit, for a while, was stunned by these thunder-like shafts. His sense were benumbed. After that, he came near Lakshman and said, "You fool! Don't you remember the prowess I displayed on the first night of my attack. At that time both you and Rama were tied by Nagpasha. Then how have you dared to fight again?"

Perhaps you have forgotten that both of you lay unconscious at that time. Surely you now wish for your death. If you did not witness my valour on that night, wait you will see it just now."

Saying this, Indrajit struck Lakshman with seven sharp arrows, Hanuman with ten and Vibbishan with hundred arrows.

Lakshman defied him with a smile and said "You Rakshasa? Your arrows are quite insipid and light. They have produced a pleasant sensation in my body. In fact, such blunt shafts are never discharged by any great hero in battle, nor any warrior like you comes to fight of his own accord."

With these words Lakshman discharged sharp arrows at Indrajit in anger. Indrajit's armour, was broken into pieces and they fell like showers of stars within the chariot. The whole body of Indrajit was literally covered with wounds, and, with his body bathed in blood, he looked like the morning sun. Then Indrajit shot sharp arrows at Lakshman, and Lakshman's armour was broken into pieces. The one struck and the other warded off the attack. Both were exhausted and both began to breathe heavily. The fight thickened at last. Both became wounded and drenched with blood. Both were skilled in fight. Both began to strike each other with sharp arrows. Both were eager for victory. Armours and flags of both the warriors were cut, and blood streamed forth from both of them. As deep, dark clouds pour down rain, so those two warriors began to discharge incessant arrows with heroic roars. The sky became covered with their arrows. They fought for a long time, but none of them was vanquished or tired. Their skill in the use of arms was uniformly wonderful, quickness quite amazing, and there was even beauty in that. Their heroic roars like thunder-claps which were repeatedly heard, struck terror into other people's hearts. Their arrows after wounding each of them struck deep into the earth. Some arrows were cut in the sky and their fragments fell to the ground. At last, the battle-field was covered with arrows as the sacrificial ground is covered with the Kusha grass. The warriors with their bodies red with blood, looked like two Kinsuka trees in blossoms and with arrows struck in their bodies they looked like two hills with trees growing on them. With their gory bodies they appeared like two burning flames.

CHAPTER LXII.

THE FALL OF INDRAJIT

Indrajit and Lakshman fought as two infuriated elephants for victory. In the meantime, Vibhishan appeared on the scene to witness the fight and after stretching his bow he began to strike the opponents with sharp arrows. As the thunder cleaves the mountain so his flaming arrows dispersed the Rakshasas, and his followers too with maces and lances began to create havoc amongst the Rakshasas. At that time, Vibhishan being surrounded by his followers looked like an adult elephant in the midst of young elephant calves.

Then, to encourage the Vanara soldiers, Vibhishan said, "Hear me, warriors. This Indrajit is the only hope of Ravan, and his army alone is now surviving; then why are you so indifferent and lazy? If this wicked Indrajit is slain then only Ravan will remain. You see Prahasta, Nikumbha, Kumbhakarna, Kumbha, Dhumraksha, Jamvumali, Mahamali, Tikshnavaga, Ashniprava, Suptagna, Yajnakupa, Vajradranstra, Sampadi, Vikata, Avighna, Japana, Manda, Praghosa Prajangha, Gangha, Agnikata, Dudharsha, Rashmikutu, Vidyutjibha, Divijjibha, Surjya-shatru, Chakramali, Kampana, Satyabastu, Devantaka and Narantaka and others have met with their deaths at your hands. You have crossed the ocean, now come over this little pond. He is the only one whom you have to conquer. Indrajit is my nephew, so it is not proper for me to kill him; still I shall for Ram renounce all affection and kindness and shall kill him to-day. I wish for his death, but tears have blinded my eyes; so Lakshman will destroy him. O Vanaras, attack in a body, the followers of Indrajit."

The Vanaras were greatly cheered up by the famous Vibhishan's words and began to wave their tails. They

clamoured in joy as the pea-cocks do at the sight of clouds. In the meantime, Jamvuvan arrived there with the Bhalluka army. The Bhallukas began to fight with trees, and stones and with the assistance of their teeth. The Rakshasas too began to strike the Bhallukas with swords, axes, lances, Patisha and other weapons. At that time, Indrajit again ran after Lakshman and a severe fight ensued. Both of them became hid behind the arrows discharged by them like the sun and the moon behind the clouds. At that time none could mark their handling of the bows and arrows, so swift were their hands. The sky became covered with their arrows, and every thing grew dark for that. In that darkness one's own party and the antagonist's party could not be distinguished. The sky was covered with uninterrupted darkness.

At that time the sun went down. Every thing became enveloped in immense darkness. Blood flowed in stream, and the ravenous birds of prey began to scream. The wind was hushed and the fire was about to be extinguished. The Gandharvas and the Charanas were stunned by the sight. The holy saints prayed for the welfare of the world, saying, "Swasti, Swasti."

In the meantime, Lakshman pierced four black steeds of Indrajit adorned with golden harness. Then aiming at the charioteer, Lakshman discharged a thunder-like Bhalla. The Bhalla resounded the sky (as soon as the bow-string was stretched) with its noise, and the head of the charioteer at once fell severed from the body. Thereupon Indrajit assumed the office of the charioteer. At that time that sight produced a great curiosity in the sight-seers. When Indrajit was doing the work of the charioteer arrows were showered upon him and upon his steeds. At that time Lakshman finding Indrajit roaming about quite fearlessly, began to shoot fast volleys of arrows. Indrajit's zeal for fight was almost gone. Gradually he grew morose and sad. At that sight the Vanara leaders began to praise Lakshman highly. Then Pramarthi, Rabhasa, Sharabha,

Gandhamadan fell with great violence upon the steeds of Indrajit. The horses thus overpowered began to vomit blood. Then those Vanaras after slaying those four horses returned to Lakshman. Thus were destroyed horses and the chariot of Indrajit. He got down from his chariot and rushed on foot towards Lakshman, discharging arrows all the while. Lakshman too began to strike Indrajit repeatedly with his shafts.

Indrajit stood on the ground. He was burning with rage and with his own effulgent energy. Those two heroes fought like two wild elephants eager for victory. Armies on both sides were engaged in a heavy fight and not a single one of them deserted his post. In fact, all then gathered together. In the meantime, Indrajit cheering up the Rakshasas, said, "O Rakshasas! Everything is now enveloped in deep darkness, and in this darkness friends cannot, at all, be distinguished from foes. In order to bewilder the Vanara troops, fight now bravely. I shall in the meantime, come back with my chariot. Just see that the Vanaras may not obstruct me in entering the city by keeping myself engaged with them."

Thus saying, Indrajit gave the Vanaras the slip and entered Lanka and got upon a well-equipped chariot. This chariot was furnished with swords, Prashasas and arrows, and was yoked with excellent horses. It was driven by an expert charioteer, capable of giving good counsels. Indrajit under the spell of Death came out of Lanka, being surrounded by the Rakshasa warriors, and with the help of swift horses soon arrived on the field of battle. Lakshman, Vibhishan and the Vanaras seeing him again upon a chariot became greatly astonished and could not but praise his swiftness.

Indrajit then began to rout the Vanara army. The Vanaras being unable to bear his irresistible shafts sought protection of Lakshman, as the created being seek protection of Brahma, the Lord of the creation.

Then Lakshman flared up in rage like fire, and with quick hands cut down the bow and arrows of Indrajit. Indrajit promptly took up another bow and put string to it. Lakshman cut that also with three arrows and struck Indrajit on the breast with five shafts like dreadful snakes. Those arrows after striking Indrajit fell to the ground like bloody serpents. Indrajit began to vomit blood from that blow. Then taking up a strong string strung up bow, Indrajit began to discharge volleys of arrows at Lakshman. But Lakshman easily warded off those shafts. This feat of Lakshman was indeed wonderful. Lakshman wounded each of the Rakshasas with three shafts and pierced Indrajit all over the body. Indrajit too incessantly discharged volleys of arrows against Lakshman who cut those arrows in their mid-way and destroyed Indrajit's charioteer with a Bhalla weapon. His horses being deprived of the charioteer began to wheel round. Then Lakshman pierced those horses with his arrows. Unable to bear that, Indrajit pierced Lakshman with ten shafts. But those glittering thunder-like arrows broke against the gold-like armour of Lakshman.

Thereupon Indrajit, thinking Lakshman's armour to be impenetrable struck Lakshman on the forehead with three sharp arrows. At that time Lakshman looked like hill with three peaks. Then being pained by them, Lakshman struck Indrajit's face adorned with ear-rings, with five arrows. Those two heroes, were bleeding all over their bodies, and thereby appeared like two Kinsuka trees in blossoms.

Then Indrajit in great rage struck Vibhishan on the face with three arrows, and struck each one of the Vanara leaders with his shafts. Struck with arrows, Vibhishan was greatly enraged and he destroyed Indrajit's horses by a blow of his mace. Indrajit's charioteer too was slain. Then Indrajit got down from the chariot and hurled a formidable weapon at Vibhishan. Lakshman seeing that formidable weapon coming towards Vibhishan with great speed, cut that into

pieces with his sharp arrows. Then Vibhishan in rage struck Indrajit on the chest with five thunder-like arrows. Those arrows pierced Indrajit and with blood appeared like bloody snakes.

Indrajit bore great grudge against his uncle. He took up a formidable shaft given by Yama. Heroic Lakshman too took a counter-arrow. That arrow was given by the irresistible Kuvera to Lakshman in a dream. The gods and the Asuras could not stand that arrow. Strong bows being drawn by the powerful bolt-like arms of those two mighty heroes made a screeching noise like cranes and arrows being fixed to the bow-strings began to glow with a (fierce) beauty. Then those two arrows being discharged from their strings coursed through the sky, lighting it up with their glow. They collided in their flight and a fierce flame was generated from their friction. Then those two shafts, like too big planets, fell to the ground, broken into hundred pieces. Thereupon, both Indrajit and Lakshman stood ashamed and burned with rage. Then Lakshman discharged Varuna weapon, but Indrajit frustrated that wonderful weapon by Rudra weapon, and then to destroy, as it were, the three worlds, he took up a fire-arm and hurled it against Lakshman. Lakshman cut that into pieces by Suryya weapon. Seeing the fire-weapon thus frustrated, he was beside himself with rage, and aimed the sharp Asura arrow at Lakshman. That was a dreadful shaft. It beat all other weapons. Lakshman prevented that Asura shaft by Maheswara weapon. The fight between those two warriors was quite amazing and dreadful. The rangers of the sky approached Lakshman and began to witness the fight. The sky grew beautiful with their splendour. At that time the gods and other citizens of heaven with Indra at their head began to protect Lakshman.

After a time Lakshman to destroy Indrajit aimed a fiery shaft. That arrow was gold-plated, beautiful and well-made, but was dreadful like a snake. In days of yore, the king of gods conquered the Asuras by that

arrow, and for this it was worshipped by the gods. The Rakshasas shuddered at its very sight. Then the heroic Lakshman fixed that divine arm to accomplish his object, saying "O god of weapon ! If Ram be unrivalled, pious and truthful, then slay Indrajit."

With these words Lakshman discharged that shaft by drawing the bow up to the ear. That shaft at once severed Indrajit's head adorned with ear-rings. The big head fell from the trunk. Indrajit's body clad in armour rolled in dust and the bow fell from his hands. Then a great clamour rose from the Vanaras as once it rose from the gods after the destruction of Vritrasura. The gods Rishis, Gandharvas and the nymphs in the sky repeatedly shouted victory to Lakshman. The Rakshasa army dispersed in different directions, and most of them ran away throwing off their arms. Some of them entered Lanka in panic, some of them jumped into the sea and some hid themselves in mountains and hills. At that time none dared to remain on the field of battle. As the rays of the sun vanish when the sun is set, so all the Rakshasas made themselves scarce after the fall of Indrajit. Indrajit was lying on the battle-field like the sun deprived of its light or like an extinguished flame. All the three worlds became delighted at the death of that cruel villain. The gods in heaven blew trumpets of victory and the Gandarvas and nymphs began to dance in joy. The sky grew clear, the wind began to blow free from dust and flowers were rained from above. All the creatures became delighted at the death of that terror to the three worlds and the Brahmins breathed again as if their fever was gone.

Then Vibhishan, Hanuman and Jamvuvan began to praise Lakshman for the death of Indrajit and greeted him repeatedly in joy. The Vanaras began to roar in delight and began to brandish their tails. Every one was speaking of Lakshman's victory, and many of them embraced one another in joy and began to talk of Lakshman's victory, and about Lakshman's valour. The gods too were immensely delighted at that heroic feat of Lakshman, a dear friend of theirs.

CHAPTER LXIII.

RAM HEARS THE NEWS.

Lakshman was bathed in blood. He felt extremely happy at heart for the destruction of Indrajit, but for bodily pain he rested his two hands on the shoulders of Vibhishan and Hanuman and appeared, before Ram and Sugriva, and going round Ram Lakshman stood before the former, as Upaendra stands before Indra. Vibhishan first spoke about Indrajit's death, saying, "O King! the great hero Lakshman has slain Indrajit this day." Ram became exceedingly delighted at this news and said, "Brother Lakshman! I am extremely glad. You have performed an impossible task. Since Indrajit is dead, we can now reckon ourselves as victorious."

With these words Ram embraced Lakshman, forcibly took him upon his lap, and began to kiss his head. Ram repeatedly gazed at Lakshman's face in deep affection and love.

Lakshman was wounded all over the body; he was exhausted and was breathing heavily from exhaustion and pain. Ram kissed Lakshman's head and passed his hand repeatedly all over Lakshman's body to soothe his pain. Ram again spoke forth in joy. "My boy! you have accomplished a very arduous feat this day. We may look on the death of Indrajit as the destruction of Ravan himself. To-day I feel myself as victorious. Indrajit was the only stay of Ravan, and due to good fortune you have succeeded in cutting off his right hand. Hanuman and Vibhishan have done a great deed. In three days my enemies have been destroyed. This day I am enemyless. Ravan hearing of his son's death will come out with a huge army and then I shall slay him by a fierce attack. Lakshman! thou art my master. Henceforth with your help neither Sita nor the earth will remain inaccessible to me."

After that Ram addressing Sushena said, "Sushena! just see that Lakshman is soon cured and freed from all dirt. Please look to it. Heroic Riksha and the Vanara

soldiers have also been wounded ; carefully attend them, so that they may rally soon."*

Thereupon Sushena made Lakshman smell a medicine and he was at once cured of all pain. His pain was gone and its sensation* stopped. Sushena then treated Vibhishan and other Vanara warriors. Lakshman recovered soon. He was free from all complaints and became cheerful. Ram, Sugriva, Vibhishan, Jambuvana and others seeing thus restored, became exceedingly glad.

CHAPTER LXIV.

RAVAN RECEIVES THE NEWS.

Here the ministers of Ravan hearing of Indrajit's death hurried to Ravan and said, "O royal sire ! Lakshman with the help of Vibhishan has slain your son in the presence of all. Indrajit has gone to the blessed region of the heroes after fighting heavily against Lakshman."

Ravan at once fell unconscious at this cruel news of his son's death. When he regained his sense, he became overwhelmed with grief. His mind became restless. Ravan then began to lament in grief, "Alas, My boy ! You conquered Indra, but how could he be slain by Lakshman's arrows ? Ah, foremost of heroes ! what to speak of Lakshman, in your wrath you could pierce, even Death himself

* In the original, the expression means life-principle that is flowing outward,—i. e. means sensation including in-carrying and out-carrying energy of the nerves.

with arrows, and could crush the peaks of Mandara into atoms. When you could die, Yama, the god of death, appears to be powerful to me. Who dies in the service of his master, repairs to heaven, this is the way with the great warriors on earth. Surely you have repaired to heaven. This day the Suras and the Asuras will sleep in peace, seeing Indrajit thus slain. Without Indrajit my eyes appear to have lost their vision. To-day in my harem I shall hear the cries of the Rakshasa women like that of the cow-elephants in a mountain cave. Alas, my boy! whither hast thou gone, leaving the throne, Lanka, Rakshasas, your wife and myself? O hero! You were to perform my funeral rites, whereas I shall have to perform that of yours! Alas! Ram, Lakshman, Sugriva and others are still alive; whither hast thou gone without removing those thorns in our sides?"

When the Rakshasa King, Ravan, was thus sorrowing for the death of his son, violent rage possessed his mind. By nature he was of irritable temper. This grief kindled his rage as the rays of the sun in summer make the sun too hot. He was repeatedly yawning in anger, and as (in the days of yore) fire broke out from Vritrasura's mouth so fire seemed to issue from the cavity of his mouth.* He was extremely aggrieved and enraged at the death of his son. He surveyed the situation and decided to put Janaki to death.

His eyes, naturally red, became inflamed and glowed with rage, and his visage became fearful like that of angry Rudra. And burning tears fell from his eyes as drops of oil tickles down a burning lamp. He repeatedly bit his lips, and gnashed his teeth. At that time, Ravan appeared like Death himself ready to destroy the world. He repeatedly cast his looks around. The Rakshasas could not approach him through fear.

Then Ravan encouraging the Rakshasas for battle said, "I propitiated God Sayambhu by my austere penance for thousand years. Now, by His blessings I have been rendered indestructible by the gods and Asuras in battle. Sayambhu gave me an armour glittering like the sun. It

* He was breathing fire and brimstone so to say.

cannot be penetrated even by thunders. When I shall put on that armour and get upon my chariot then even Indra will not dare to approach me. O Rakshasas! fetch with a flourish of trumpets that formidable bow and arrow which God Sayambhu gave me in the war between the gods and the Asuras. With that I shall destroy Ram and Lakshman this day."

Then, that formidable warrior for the destruction of Janaki said, "You see, Indrajit in order to mislead the Vanaras, produced a magic illusion about the destruction of Sita. What was merely an illusion I shall carry into real execution. Janaki is devoted to non-Kshatriya Ram, I shall put her to death."

With these words Ravan took up a sword blue as the sky and hurried towards the Asoka forest. His wife and ministers followed him. At that sight the Rakshasas said amongst themselves, "This Ram and Lakshman will be greatly frightened at the sight of this formidable hero. He, in his anger, conquered hundreds of kings and destroyed thousands of enemies. By his prowess he enjoys all the wealth of the world."

Ravan was hurrying towards the Asoka forest and his well-wishers were dissuading him from the foul act of killing a woman. Ravan hied towards Janaki as the Rahu rushes towards the star Rohini.

Sita was guarded by the Rakshasis in the Asoka forest. She espied from distance that Ravan, without listening to any dissuading voice, was rushing towards her, with an upraised sword. At that sight she broke forth in grief, "Alas! when this wicked villain is coming towards me with an uplifted sword, surely he will then slay this helpless soul. I am devoted to my husband, but he repeatedly tempted me to be his wife, but I have warded him off every time. Now being overwhelmed with grief and rage he will surely put me to death for my refusal. Or it might be that this non-Aryan in order to possess me has destroyed Ram and Lakshman. Immediately before this the Rakshasas were proclaiming their victory with loud roars. I have just now heard their roars. Alas! Ram and Laksh-

man have lost their lives just for me or it might be that being unable to slay Ram and Lakshman, in sorrow for his son's death, he has come to put me to death. Alas! I was foolish enough not to have listened to Hanuman's words. If then left the place on his back without waiting for my husband's victory, then there wouldn't have been any occasion to rue. I could have been happy in my husband's lap."

"Alas! When Kausalya, the mother of only son, will hear of this, her heart will burst in grief. She will then remember everything about her son, his birth, childhood, and youth. She will in despair then enter into fire or water. Cursed be that wicked and unchaste Kubja Manthara, for her worshipful Kausalya will suffer thus."

Then gentle Suparswa, the wise counsellor of Ravan, seeing Janaki in distress like the star Rohini fallen into the grip of a bad planet in the absence of the moon, repeatedly dissuading Ravan said, "O King! thou art brother to Kuvera, how could you banish all righteousness to kill a woman? O hero you have taken to family-life, its preparatory stage by practising austerity and penance and by finishing the Vedas in the house of the preceptor. I can't understand how could you decide to kill a woman. Janaki is a beauty, wait till Ram's death, and give vent to your wrath by taking us with you to battle. To-day is the fourteenth day after the full moon, make all preparations this day and set out for victory on the day of the new moon. You are wise and warlike; destroy Ram in battle, then Janaki will surely be yours."

Ravan thus being persuaded by Suparswa turned back and entered the Council chamber again.

CHAPTER LXV.

RAM'S FIGHT.

Ravan entered the Council Chamber with a troubled mind. He breathed like a lion and having taken his seat on his excellent throne humbly began, "O Rakshasa warriors! set out just now with horses and elephants for battle, surround Ram and destroy him. As in the rainy season, the clouds rain incessantly so shower your arrows in anger upon Ram. He may be wounded this day and to-morrow I shall slay him in the presence of all."

Thereupon, the Rakshasas set out in swift chariots and soon arriving on the field of battle, began to strike the Vanaras with lances, parighas, pattihās and other weapons. The Vanaras too in their turn hurled trees and stones against them. The fight took place in the morning. The Vanaras and the Rakshasas struck one another with various arms. Stream of blood began to flow drowning the dusts raised by the trampling of the soldiers. Elephants and chariots were its banks as it were, arrows and banners bearing the insignia of fish were like trees grown on its banks. Dead bodies floated fast in that stream like logs of wood in water. The Vanaras began to tear the noses and ears of the Rakshasas by biting them with their sharp teeth. As birds in number fall upon a tree so number of Vanaras fell upon each one of the Rakshasas. The Rakshasas too began to destroy the Vanaras by striking them hard with maces, Prashsa, swords and axes.

The Vanaras being overpowered by the Rakshasas sought protection of Ram. Heroic Ram, thereupon, entered the Raksha army with bow in his hand. When entering the Raksha line, Ram began to smother the Rakshasas with his fiery shafts. Then the Rakshasas could not approach him, as clouds cannot come near the sun. Ram's quickness was quite amazing. Sometimes he was leading the army, sometimes he removed the generals, but none could detect his movements as none can see the wind blowing in the forest. The Rakshasa army was scattered and routed by his arrows. Only this much was

then seen but none could find out that quick hero. As a man cannot find out the vital principle* that underlies and governs his sensations of touch, vision and sound, likewise the Rakshasas could not detect the fighting hero. Here Ram destroyed the elephants, there he slew the generals, but Ram could not be seen! The Rakshasas then blind with anger began to strike all who looked like Ram. Every one was stupified and bewildered by the Gandharva arms of Ram. At that time none could discern Ram: Sometimes they saw thousands of Ram in the battle field, again they saw only one Ram. Sometimes they saw only the restless bow of Ram, but not Ram. At that time all considered Ram's bow as the noose of Death. Within one-eighth part of the day, Ram by his fiery shafts destroyed ten thousand swift chariots, eighteen thousand elephants, fourteen thousand horses with their riders, and two lacs of infantry. The surviving Rakshasas ran away in fear to Lanka. The battle-field was strewn with the carcasses of horses, elephants, and infantry lying hither and thither. That place appeared quite dreadful like the spot of angry Rudra. Then the Gandharvas, Siddhas and saints praised Ram repeatedly.

Ram addressing Sugriva, Vibhishan, Hanuman, Jamvuvan, Mainda and Drivida said, "You see, this is the limit to my force of arms and also that of Rudra.

* The energy for which sensation is possible, without which the organs lose their power of sensation as in a dead-man. The sanskrit expression "Jivatma" is distinct and different from true soul within which the latter lies shrouded like some gem wrapped up in a piece of linen, our joys and sorrows belong to "Jivatma" and not to the soul. Jivatma in English psychological term is mind or brain as one may prefer to name,—Translator.

CHAPTER LXVI

THE PANIC.

Then the Rakshasas of Lanka hearing of the destruction of the vast Rakshasa army by Ram, became greatly alarmed. Then thinking of impending danger they grew sad in their hearts. At that time the Rakshasa women, deprived of their husbands and sons, began to lament bitterly. "Alas! why did that grim Rakshasi Surpanakha go to cupid-like Ram? she deserves death from all points of view. That ugly Rakshasi became enamoured of beautiful Ram. She is without any accomplishment, besides a shrew. Ram is highly accomplished and sweet-tongued. Why did she grow enamoured of Ram? The Rakshasas are extremely unfortunate. For the destruction of that heroic Khara and Dushan this grey haired, old hag with wrinkled skin did such a ridiculous thing. It is only for her that Ravan has resorted to hostilities with Ram and he abducted Janaki. But instead of winning Janaki, inextinguishable hostility has occurred between him and Ram. When this heroic Ram could single-handed slay Viradha Rakshasa, was it not even then a sufficient proof of the prowess of Ram to Ravan hankering for Sita? It was more than sufficient proof of Ram's great prowess when he destroyed fourteen thousand Rakshasas with Khara and Dushan in Janasthan by his fiery shafts. It was enough proof of his valour when he slew angry, roaring Kavandha and Vale of clouds' hue. Noble Vibhishan gave sufficient well-meaning and pious counsel to Ravan for the welfare of the Rakshasas, but his naughtiness and ignorance made those words unpalatable to him. Alas! Lanka would not have turned into a desert if Ravan only listened to his words. Now, Kumbha-Karna, Atikaya and Indrajit have fallen by the hands of the enemy. Will not Ravan be roused to his senses after seeing all these happenings? Each and every Rakshasa woman in Lanka is lamenting her sad and cruel loss. "Where has gone my son? Whither has fled my brother? Where has gone my husband leaving me?" All these cries were being heard

rising from the Rakshasa women of each and every house in Lanka. "Heroic Ram has destroyed a vast number of chariots, horses, elephants and infantry. It seems as if Rudra, Vishnu, Indra or Death himself has entered Lanka in the form of Ram. Now this city is denuded of all great heroes. We too are in despair as to our lives. There is no end to our troubles. We are now helpless and shedding (idle) tears. Heroic Ravan is proud of the boon received from gods. He does not at all understand that all these great dangers are due to Ram. Ram is resolved on his destruction. There is none amongst the gods, Gandharvas and Pishachas who can now save him. In every fight now-a-days many evil portents are seen. The wise and old people say that these omens predict Ravan's death at the hands of Ram. Formerly, Brahma, the Grand Sire of Creation, being pleased made Ravan indestructible by the gods and Danavas, but when Ravan received that boon, he did not take man into account. Perhaps due to his ill-luck that fatal and formidable man has appeared. Once, the gods being heavily oppressed by Ravan, prayed hard to Brahma. Brahma being pleased with their prayer, said for their welfare. "Henceforth, the Rakshasas and the Danavas will live in constant fear of gods. Then the gods worshipped Mahadev, the god of gods. Being pleased with their prayers, He said, "O gods! you needn't fear. For your welfare, there will be born a woman for the destruction of the Rakshasas. That Janaki will destroy the Rakshasas as formerly Hunger at the instigation of the gods destroyed the Danavas. For the misdeed of wicked and haughty Ravan our doom is at hand. Ram has seized Lanka like Universal Destruction at the end of a cycle of creation. We do not find anybody in the world who can protect us now. We are now in distress like elephants encircled by a forest-fire. There is no way of our escape. Noble Vibhishan has done the right thing; he has taken shelter under him before all these troubles have proceeded." Thus lamented the Rakshasa women embracing one another's neck and they cried from excessive fear.

Ravan at last heard these piteous cries of the Rakshasa women from every house of Lanka. He heaved a deep sigh and became extremely angry. His eyes became red. He bit his lips repeatedly. In his rage, he appeared formid-

able like the Doomsday fire. He seemed to scorch the Rakshasas by the fire of his eyes, and he angrily said to Mahodara, Mahaparswa, Virupaksha and others. "O heroes ! Ask the army to get ready immediately and set out for battle."

Then the great army got ready for fight and performed many auspicious rites for victory, and after singing praise of Ravan, they respectfully stood before Ravan.

Then Ravan angrily said, "O warriors ! this day I shall destroy Ram and Lakshman with my arrows keen as the doomsday sun. I shall take revenge for the death of Khara, Dushan, Kumbha-Karna and Indrajit this day. The sky and the sea will be covered with my arrows. I shall to-day churn† the Vanaras by my arrows issuing from my bow like the sea. I shall this day smother like elephant the Vanaras.‡ The Vanaras will this day cover the battle field with their severed heads. To-day with one shaft I shall destroy hundreds of Vanaras. I shall to-day wipe off the tears of those Rakshasas who have lost their brothers and sons, by killing their enemies. To-day, I shall offer the flesh of my enemies to the ravenous birds of prey. Get my chariot soon ready and fetch my bow and arrow. Let the surviving hosts of Lanka march with me.

Mahaparswa asked the army leaders to get the army immediately ready. Thereupon the generals mobilised the Rakshasa army. In no time the grim looking Rakshasa army stood ready for battle. They were equipped with various weapons. Then the generals brought to the field one million chariots, three million elephants, sixty million horses, sixty million of asses and camels. In the meantime, the charioteer brought the chariot. It was full of divine weapons and adorned with gems and protected with golden net-work. It was yoked with eight swift horses. The Rakshasas with wonder stared at the chariot. Ravan got upon that car glittering like hundreds of sun. And being surrounded by the Rakshasas he marched with tremendous force, tearing the earth as it were by his process. Bugles, trumpets and conches blew from all sides. That

† Molest. ‡ The simile is as the elephant tramples the lotus plants in a lake.

wicked Ravan, the abductor of Sita, embellished with royal umbrella and chowries came to fight against Ram. All the quarters became resound with terrific noise. The earth shook at that, and the Vanaras ran away in fear. Mahaparswa, Mahodara, and Virupaksha advanced at the command of Ravan. Ravan proceeded swiftly towards the gate where stood Ram and Lakshman. The sun grew dim and all the quarters became enveloped in intense darkness. The clouds were raining blood and the horses began to stumble. In the mean time a vulture perched on the flag staff of Ravan. Ravenous vultures and jackals were crying on all sides. The left eye and left arm of Ravan began to throb repeatedly. His face grew pale and his voice grew hoarse. Meteors began to fall from the sky with a thundering noise. Ravan was blind to his impending doom. Therefore, he proceeded towards the battlefield by disregarding all these evil portents.

In the meantime the Vanaras grew excited by the rattling sound of their enemy's chariots. Ravan appeared on the field of battle. A heavy fight ensued between the two sides. The Vanaras were being seriously wounded by the sharp arrows of Ravan. Some lost their heads, some their eyes or ears, some pierced in their hearts, and some fell suffocated, and some one's sides were split up.

Where Ravan advanced in anger, with eyes revclving in rage, the Vanaras could not stand before his sharp shafts.

CHAPTER LXVII

THE GREAT BATTLE

Gradually, the field of battle became covered with the wounded bodies of the Vanaraas. As a burning lamp is unbearable to moths, so the flaming arrows of Ravan were unbearable to the Vanaras. They were smothered by his burning arrows and began to run away with shrieks as elephants do from a forest fire. But Ravan chased them hotly as the wind chase after the clouds. The Vanaras then with their wounded bodies appeared before Ram for protection. Seeing that Sugriva after stationing Sushena in his place rushed forward with a huge tree a number of Vanaras with trees and stones followed him. Appearing on the scene of action Sugriva commenced a heavy fight, and as a strong gale breaks down trees so he levelled the Rakshasas to the ground like hailstorms upon the birds, he showered stones upon the Rakshasas. Many of the Rakshasas then ran away in fear of their lives.

In the meantime Virupaksha came forward and challenged Sugriva. The Vanaras then stood in readiness at the sight of Virupaksha. Virupaksha began to shower volleys of arrows upon Sugriva. Sugriva then in rage struck down his elephant. Virupaksha jumped on the ground and rushed towards Sugriva with his sword and shield. Sugriva hurled a big stone at Virupaksha. He moved away a little, the stone missed him and Virupaksha struck Sugriva violently with his sword. Sugriva fell down unconscious, but gaining consciousness within a short time dealt a mighty blow on Virupaksha's chest. Virupaksha firmly stood that blow and in his turn cut down Sugriva's armour with his sword. Sugriva then aimed a severe slap, but Virupaksha avoided the blow by his clever move, and struck a violent fist blow on Sugriva's chest. Sugriva after recovering from that blow dealt a severe slap on Virupaksha's forehead. Virupaksha fell unconscious. He began to vomit blood. His eyes were shot upwards and Virupaksha breathed his last. Then the Vanaras roared in victory like the sea.

CHAPTER LXVIII..

RAVAN'S FIGHT.

Troops on both sides were being lost like the waters of a pond in summer.

The Rakshasa king, Ravan, was greatly enraged at the sight of Virupaksha's death and was also pained at the heavy loss of his own troops. At that time Mahodara was by his side, Ravan then addressing Mahodara said, "Mahodara ! Now the only hope of victory rests upon you, then put up a brave fight and destroy the enemies. I have maintained you so long, now the time has come for its return. So get yourself for battle."

Thereupon, Mahodara in obedience to the behest of his master entered the enemy's line, as moth enters into a flame. The mighty Vanaras were striking the Rakshasas with huge stones and trees. Mahodara in rage began to destroy the Vanaras by his golden arrows. The Vanaras began to disperse in fear.

Sugriva seeing his troops thus scattered by Mahodara, took up a huge rock for the destruction of the latter, and hurled it with great violence against the Rakshasa chief. But Mahodara cut that into pieces. Then Sugriva took up a Parigha from the ground and with it destroyed the horses of Mahodara. Mahodara jumped down from his chariot and took up a club. The one with the club and the other with the flaming Parigha looked like clouds with lightning. Mahodara in rage hurled that huge mace glittering like the sun against Sugriva. Sugriva warded that off with the Parigha, but the Parigha was broken into pieces. Sugriva then picked up a formidable Mushala from the battle field and hurled it towards Mahodara, Mahodara in order to prevent that threw a mace, but it was broken into fragments. Both of them were then without any arms, but both were heroic and strong and they began to strike each other with fists. Both of them fell on the ground and a heavy fight ensued. Gradually both of them became exhausted. But they again stood up against each other

with swords. Each one sought for an opportunity to strike and began to wheel around one another from left to right. In the meantime Mahodara stuck quickly on the armour of Sugriva. The sword stuck fast into the armour and as Mahodara tried to draw out the sword, Sugriva severed his head adorned with helmet and ear-rings. Thereupon the Rakshasas ran away in fear, and the Vanaras set up heroic roars. Ram was delighted at this sight. Mahodara lay on the ground like a cleft mountain and Sugriva stood there in heroic pride like the sun. The denizens of heaven looked at Sugriva with eyes of approbation.

Then Mahaparswa flew into rage at the destruction of Mahodara and he entered the army commanded by Angada, and began to destroy the Vanaras right and left. Heroic Angada, thereupon, roared like an ocean and struck Mahaparswa with a glittering Parigha. Mahaparswa fell unconscious from his car. In the meantime heroic Jamvuvan came out and crushed his chariot and horses by a huge piece of rock.

Mahaparswa, however, soon regained consciousness and began to smother Angada with sharp arrows. Angada then pushed forward and dealt a severe slap on Mahaparswa's ear. Mahaparswa struck Angada with a sharp axe on his shoulder. But Angada was not the least affected by that blow but dealt a severe fist blow on his chest. Mahaparswa's ribs were broken and he fell at once dead on the ground. The Vanaras roared in delight and the Rakshasas ran away in panic.

Ravan was greatly enraged at that sight and addressing his charioteer said, "you see, my counsellors and followers are being daily destroyed, the City of Lanka is under siege for a long time. I shall remove my intense grief by slaying Ram and Lakshman this day. I shall cut down that big tree namely Ram, whose flower is Sita and whose branches are Sugriva, Jamvuvan, Kumud, Nala, Dvivida Mainda, Angada, Gandhamadan, Sushena, Hanuman and other leaders of the Vanaras."

With these words Ravan rushed towards Ram by resounding the field of battle with the deep rumbling noise of his car. The earth shook at the motion of his chariot, and beasts and birds were frightened by it.

The battle field was densely crowded by the Vanara troops Ravan in order to destroy them discharged the formidable Tamasha weapon made by Brahma. The Vanaras were burnt and singed by that weapon and fell in numbers on the field of battle. Many ran away in fear, and the cloud of dusts raised by the stampede of the Vanaras covered the sky. In short none could bear that dreadful weapon. Thus the Vanaras were dispersed and Ravan saw Ram and Lakshman standing at a short distance from him. Ram stood ready for the fight by stretching forth his formidable bow.

Heroic Ram seeing wicked Ravan come at last began to twang his bow repeatedly. The tremendous sound produced by the twanging of his bow seemed to rend the sky and the earth and the Rakshasas fainted in fear.

Ravan stood in front of Ram and Lakshman, like the formidable planet Ketu before the sun and the moon.

In the meantime, Lakshman got ready for the fight and began to shower shafts like tongues of fire on Ravan. Ravan too with amazing quickness cut those arrows a single shaft with a single arrow, two with two, three with three, ten with ten and so on. Ravan thus passed by Lakshman and came before Ram, steady like a mountain, and began to shower shafts upon him, with eyes red with anger. Ram too quickly took up the Bhalla weapon and with it cut off those sharp shafts formidable like dreadful snakes.

Both of them were invincible and at times the one wheeled round the other from left to right. All beings became alarmed at the sight of those two mighty heroes, formidable as Death. The sky was overcast with their arrows with clouds in the rainy season surcharged with lightning and the interstices caused by their arrows (in that thick screen) appeared like so many windows. The sky grew dark even in day time. Both were eager for each other's destruction, and a fierce fight ensued as between Indra and Vritrasura. Both were skilled in the art of battle, and both were the foremost of the warriors and along whatever spot they passed, that place was agitated with their arrows as if with the waves of a wind-tossed ocean.

Then Ravan struck Ram on the forehead with a number of Narachas. But being struck by those arms Ram however, was not least pained being struck by Narach, of a blue lotus, discharged from that formidable bow. He then stretched his bow, uttered mantras and began to discharge volleys of shafts in anger.

Then Ram skilled in the use of all weapons, struck Ravan with sharp weapons on the forehead. Those arrows, like five hooded snakes though obstructed by counter shafts struck Ravan's forehead and entered the earth with a hissing sound. Ravan became exceedingly angry, and got ready to discharge the formidable Asura weapons at Ram. Those weapons were shaped like the mouths of the lions and tigers, some of them were shaped like the heads of vultures, hawks and jackals; some of them were formed like the heads of boars, cocks, and of dogs. Those weapons began to fall with hissing sounds. Ravan panted like an angry serpent.

Thereupon Ram being surrounded by the Asura weapons discharged fire arms.* Amongst those weapons some were like flame, some like the sun, some like the meteors, some like lightning and some were bright like stars and planets. All those Asura weapons were shattered into pieces by Ram's fire-arms.

At that sight, Sugriva and other vanaras surrounded Ram in joy and set up heroic roars. Ravan seeing those Asura weapons thus frustrated became exceedingly enraged and discharged the formidable Maya weapon made by Maya. From his bow-string various sorts of arms like thunderbolt began to be discharged, incessantly Ram prevented those weapons by the Gandharva weapon.

Thereupon Ravan, in wrath, uttered the mantra of samastra and then bright discs like the sun and the moon began to shoot from his bow Ram cut those with sharp weapons. Then Ravan struck Ram with ten arrows on the heart, but Ram was not the least moved by it. Then heroic Lakshman in anger with seven arrows cut down his banner bearing the ensign of human heads, and severed the charioteer's head, and with five arrows he cut down

* The original expression is "Agnaya Astra."

Ravan's bow shaped like the trunk of an elephant. At that time Vibhishan too jumped forward and killed his huge horses like the hills. Then Ravan in anger hurled a Shakti lightning against him.

Lakshman seeing that formidable Sakti aimed at Vibhishan cut it into pieces in the midway. The Vanaras roared in delight and that golden Sakti being broken into three pieces fell on the ground like flaming meteors. Thereupon Ravan took up another Sakti. That was burning with its own effulgence and was unbearable even to Death himself. That Shakti being whirled with force, began to emit a fierce glow like lightning.

Lakshman fearing that Vibhishan's life was in danger soon came near him and began to discharge arrows to Ravan to save Vibhishan's life. Then Ravan gave up his determination for slaying his own brother and then looking at Lakshman said, 'Thou pride of the valour ! When you have saved Vibishan by being engaged yourself in fighting, I shall leave him aside and hurl it against you. This Shakti eager to drink the enemy's blood will surely destroy you this day.'

With these words heroic Ravan hurled that flaming Shakti towards Lakshman, roaring like a lion. The Shakti was made by the magic spell of Maya Danava, was furnished with eight bells, producing a tremendous noise, and was irresistible. The Shakti then with a thundering noise proceeded towards Lakshman.

At that sight Ram became alarmed and said, "Swasti, Swasti, Swasti, ¹ let good betide Lakshman. All your force and energy be frustrated and be you destroyed."

Then that terrible Shakti, like the forked tongue of the king of snakes, pierced Lakshman's dauntless breast with great force, and it struck deep into his chest. Lakshman fainted on the ground.

Ram, standing by him, became overwhelmed with

¹ Something like "Amen."

fraternal grief at the sight of the condition of Lakshman. Tears rolled down his eyes in streams.

He brooded over for some time and then in anger became formidable like the Doomsday fire and thinking that it was not the fit time to give up oneself to grief became earnest about the destruction of Ravan.

Ram saw Lakshman thus struck with the Shakti and lying on the ground like a hill infested with snakes. The Vanaras tried to draw out the Shakti from Lakshman's chest, but being smothered by Ravan's arrows they could not succeed in any way. That Shakti the destroyer of enemies—struck on the ground by piercing Lakshman's chest through and through. The mighty Ram plucked out the Shakti with two hands and broke it into pieces in anger.

At that time too Ravan discharged sharp, arrows penetrating towards Ram, but Ram did not pay any heed to them and embracing Lakshman with affection said to Sugriva and Hanuman, "Ravan, surrounding Lakshman like this, the time for showing that valour has arrived for which I have prayed for such a length of time I shall slay him this day. As the sight of the clouds are covetable to the Chatak bird in the season of rains, so the presence of this wicked villain has become exceedingly covetable to me. And verily I swear unto you that you will find the earth either without Ravan or Ram. All sorts of misfortunes have occurred to me, like the loss of my kingdom ; exile, a nomadic life in the forest, abduction of Janaki, and the hostility of the Rakshasa. I have suffered from internal mental agonies and physical pains, but I shall forget all those things by destroying wicked Ravan this day.

For whom I have collected the Vanara troops, slain Vali and conferred his Kingdom on Sugriva, and have crossed the sea by building a bridge over it, that villain is now present before my sight. As none can live before the gaze of a snake that can inject its venom even by its look, as snakes cannot escape when they are within the sight of Garura, the king of birds, so that

Villain has come within my view and I shall destroy him immediately. O Vanaras! Sitting on the peaks of the hills witness our fighting. The Sidhas, Charanas, Gandharvas, and all denizens of the three worlds will today witness the work of Ram with their own eyes. I shall perform this day such wonderful feat, that so long the world lasts people will speak of it."

With these words heroic Ram got ready to discharge arrows against Ravan. Ravan too began to shower arrows upon Ram as clouds pour forth rains. The battlefield was filled with a tremendous noise by the clashing of antagonistic arms, and the broken parts of the arrows fell on the ground with flaming ends. All the creatures grew frightened at the twanging sound of their bow strings. In the meantime Ravan being smothered by Ram's arrows soon fled from the battlefield like a cloud chased by the wind.

Then Ram said to Sushena, Lakshman is here rolling on the ground like a snake, he is dearer to me than my life. My heart acheth seeing him thus suffering heavily and besmeared with blood. I have no more energy for fighting. Alas! If Lakshman dies what happiness will then be in life, what is the good of living at all? I am losing my strength, my bow is slipping from my grasp, my eyes are dim with tears, my body is benumbed as if in a dream, anxiety smothers my heart and I feel tempted to die."

At that time, Lakshman being restless with pain cried out in an unnatural voice. Ram was more grieved by it, and then addressing Sushena, he said "Sushena! Seeing brother Lakshman lying on the field of battle, even victory in war does not appear pleasant to me. Can the moon delight others by being absent from the sky? What is the good of fighting any more? What is the good of retaining my life? When I came to the forest, this hero accompanied me, now I shall accompany him to the abode of Death. He is loving and most obedient to me, he has met with such fate at the hands of the crooked Rakshasa warrior. In every place, wives

may be had, in every country one may get friends, but there is not a place where one can get a brother like Lakshman. Sushena! What is the good of getting back my kingdom without Lakshman? What shall I say to mother Sumitra devoted to her son after returning to Ayodhya? When she will chide me in sorrow for her son, how shall I bear that? What shall I say to mother Kausalya and mother Kaikeyi? When Bharat and Shatrughna will ask me you went to the forest with Lakshman, but why have you come back without him, what shall I then say to them? Death seems to me more preferable than bearing the rebukes of my near and dear ones. I know not what great sins I did commit in my former birth for which virtuous Lakshman is slain before me! O, my brother! O, my brother! O, great warrior! Why do you go alone to the next world, leaving me behind? I am crying for you, I am grieving for thee, why don't you greet me with love? You used to console me when I was smitten with sorrow in hills and forests, why are you then silent now?"

Then Sushena seeing Ram thus lamenting in sorrow-stricken heart said, "O great hero! Banish this despair and all sorrowful thoughts. Such thoughts and such judgments are injurious like the arrows of an enemy. 'Dear Lakshman is alive' look, his face is quite beaming and bright, it has not been distorted, nor turned blue. His palms are red like the petals of a lotus and his eyes are bright. O King! A dead man has not got these signs. Lakshman is lying stretched on the ground and from the constant throbbings of his heart, his respiration can be inferred." Wise Sushena saying all these to Ram then said to Hanuman, "O noble one! Go to that mountain of medicines about which Jamvuvan spoke to you formerly, and soon fetch all the medicinal plants that have grown on its southern peak. For the cure of Lakshman bring without delay, Visalya

1 Hindu systems of medicine reached their perfection long, long before other nations were even aware of the elementary notions of cure.

Karani, Savarna Karani, Sanjivani and Sandhyani, these four kinds of medicines."

Then, Hanuman arrived at the mountain of medicines and having found no trace of them, he began to think, "Let me carry this peak. From what I could understand from Sushena's words, the medicines are on this peak. If I cannot take Visalya-Karani, people will think me a fool, and if I waste time in thoughts, there is great danger to Lakshman's life."

Thus thinking Hanuman moved the peak three times with his hands and then plucked it bodily and carried the peak covered with trees plants and flowers on his arms and got upon the sky and in great speed arrived before Sushena, and then resting the peak, said, "Sushena! I could not find out the medicines spoken by you, therefore I have brought the entire peak before you."

Thereupon, Sushena after praising Hanuman found out the medicines. The Vanaras were astonished at this mighty feat of Hanuman. Then Sushena after crushing the medicinal plants put them before Lakshman's nostrils for his inhalation. As soon as Lakshman inhaled them he was cured of all pains, he sat up being free from the splinter.¹ The Vanaras greeted him with joy. "Come, Come" with these words on his lips, Ram embraced him with tearful eyes. "My boy! It is sheer good luck that I find you alive to-day. If you die, of what use is Janaki, victory in war or even this life to me?"

Lakshman was, however, greatly sorry for such words of Ram and seeing his lack of enthusiasm, and promptness on his part, he said, 'Oh, worshipful lord! Is it becoming of you to neglect your vows? The sign

1 There were four kinds of cure amongst the ancient Hindus, the first and the best was to cure a person by Mantras, then by smell of the medicines, then by wearing them on the person as an amulet and the last i. e. inferior to the first three methods of cure was to cure, a person by administering the drug through the mouth.

of greatness is to fulfil one's promise. Truthful persons never behave otherwise. O hero ! Why do you despair so much on my account ? Destroy wicked Ravan this day with all his hosts ; can an elephant escape from a roaring lion ? This day, the wicked fellow will surely meet with his death at your hand. I wish that you should slay him before the sun sets in the evening. It is duty to fulfil one's pledge, if you care to recover Janaki, then comply with my words."

CHAPTER LXIX

THE GREAT BATTLE BEGINS

In the mean time, the Raksha King, Ravan, got upon another chariot and rushed towards Ram, as Rahu rushes towards the sun, and he began to shower arrows on Ram, as the clouds pour forth rain. Thereupon, Ram too took up his bow and began to discharge flaming arrows against Ravan.

At that time, the denizens of heaven seeing Ram standing on the ground, and Ravan seated on a chariot talked amongst themselves, "such a contest is unequal since one is on the ground and the other is on the car." At these words Indra, king of Gods, said to Matali, "Take this chariot soon to Ram and tell him that the king of Gods has sent down this chariot for you. O charioteer ! Go down on earth and accomplish this noble deed."

Then the divine charioteer bowing down to Indra said, "I shall soon be a charioteer to Ram." With these words he yoked yellow steeds ornamented with gold and adorned with white manes. That chariot was

made of sapphire and wrought in gold and looked bright like the morning sun. Its staff was made of gold. Matali descended with that chariot on earth and holding the reins in his hands appeared before Ram, and said with joined palms, "O hero! The king of Gods for your victory has sent down this chariot, this formidable bow of Indra, this bright armour, these glittering arrows like the sun, and this bright Shakti, I shall act as your charioteer. As Indra destroyed the Danavas by getting upon this chariot so destroy wicked Ravan this day."

Then Ram wheeled round the divine chariot and got upon it with a respectful bow.

Then fierce fight ensued between Ram and Ravan. Ram began to prevent the Gandharva weapons of Ravan by Gandharva arms, and the Daiva weapons by the same arms. In the meantime, Ravan in anger discharged the Rakshasa weapon against Ram. As soon as that was discharged, it assumed the form of a dreadful snake and proceeded vomiting venom on its way. It was burning with its own effulgence and its touch was rough like that of Vasuki, the King of snakes. At that time the sky became covered with the Rakshasa weapons. Then heroic Ram discharged the Garura weapon to frustrate the Uraga weapon. Garura being the enemy of snakes, destroyed all the snake-like weapons in no time. Thereupon, Ravan became enraged and began to strike Ram with a shower of arrows and pierced Matali with shafts. With one shaft, Ravan cut down the golden flagstaff of Ram's chariot and destroyed the steeds of Indra yoked before the car. Thereupon, the denizens of heaven grew dejected with despair. The planet Rahu, seeing Ram under the grip of Ravan, like the moon under eclipse, attacked Rohini—the consort of the moon and daughter of Projapati. The ocean became agitated and was covered with smoke and the billows seemed to touch the sun in the horizon in fury. The bright sun grew dim. It was seen attached to a comet, like a headless trunk thrown on its cap. Inauspicious stars attacked the auspicious stars of the Kushala

Kings. And Ravan seemed formidable like the huge Mainaka hill standing with a bow in his hand. At that time Ram being smitten with his arrows, could not aim at Ravan. His eyes became red with anger and the countenance grew grave with a fearful frown. He began to scorch the Rakshasas by his wrath. All became dismayed at the sight of his dreadful look, and nature was convulsed with fear, evil portents were seen in the sky. In fact, even Ravan himself was frightened seeing that dreadful wrath of Ram and various evil portents, on all sides. At that time the denizens of heaven were watching with intent the great fight between the two formidable warriors.¹ They took either Rams or Ravan's side and prayed for the victory of their favourite. The Asuras prayed for Ravan's victory and the gods for that of Ram.

After a while, wicked Ravan took up a great Shula for the destruction of Ram. That formidable Shula was even the terror of Death himself.

Its three high tridents struck terror at sight. It was burning like the Doomsday-fire. Ravan in rage held that Shula in hand and set up a heroic roar cheering the Rakshasas with courage and hope. Its terrific sound filled all directions and all creatures trembled with fear and the sea heaved up in great agitation.

Wicked Ravan, raising up the Shula, told Ram with blood-shot eyes in anger.

'Here, I take up this formidable Shula, like the thunderbolt, and shall surely destroy you this day by it. You will be one of those members who have fallen on the field of battle.'

¹ As almost all the details here been repeated again and again in each and every fight described in the Yudhya-kanda, we have omitted useless repetitions which add neither to the beauty, nor to the vigour of the description, nor is of any poetic value. These repetitions conclusively prove that other hands than that of Valmiki were always ready to execute their poetical ebolutions under the sanction of the sacred name of Valmiki. A great poet like Valmiki can never be guilty of such frivolous and worthless repetitions.—Translator.

Saying this Ravan hurled that dreadful Shula. As soon as Shula, encircled with eight bells, was discharged it proceeded like a fearful lightning blinding all eyes with its fierce glow. Then as, Indra puts out the Doomsday-fire by incessant showers of rain, so Ram tried to prevent that mighty Shula with showers of arrows. But as fire burns flies and moths, so that Shula reduced Ram's arrows into ashes. Thereupon, Ram grew quite furious and took upon Shakti brought by Matali the Charioteer of Indra.

That Shakti set everything into blaze, like a comet that appears on the day of universal Dissolution and fell violently upon that Shula, and the shula at once was shivered into pieces.

Then heroic Ram struck with arrows Ravan's steeds and pierced his forehead. Ravan being wounded all over the body began to bleed profusely, and with number of heads and arms¹ he looked like an Asoka tree in blossom.

Thereupon, Ravan grew furious, he took up his bow and began to shower arrows on Ram as the clouds rain upon a lake. But heroic Ram remained quite unmoved like a hill, and began to ward off all the shafts. Then Ravan in swift hands began to strike Ram's flanks with arrows bright as the sun's rays. Being wounded by those arrows looked like a Kinsuka tree in bloom, and in anger he grew quite incapable of being looked at like the glowing sun on the day of the universal dissolution of the world.

Then Ram addressed Ravan in anger and said, "Thou worst of the Rakshasas! Thou hast carried off my helpless wife from Janasthan without thinking of the consequences, and thou shalt be destroyed for that reason. Thou didst carry away Janaki when she was quite helpless in the forest and for that thou dost

1 After a long lapse of epic description here again Ravan is a hydraheaded monster. Ravan seldom appears with numerous hands and heads.

consider thyself a hero! Thou didst behave like a coward towards a woman whose husband was distant from her and still thou dost consider thyself valiant. Thou shameless villain! thou hast violated the path of virtue. In thy haughtiness thou hast taken Death on your lap and thinkest thyself to be acceptable to her. Thou art brother of Kuvera, the lord of the Yakshasas, and what a glorious act thou hast performed by stealing another's wife! Surely, it is a proof of thy valour! Now, you will have to reap the consequences of your haughty deeds."

"Thou fool! Thou hast vanity in thy mind as a hero, but dost thou not feel ashamed to steal another's wife like a thief? Now, if that thing occurred in my presence, surely then you would have to follow your brother Khara and could have seen his face in the realm of death."

"It is really my good luck that I have gained your sight. I shall even now despatch you to the abode of Death with my sharp arrows. The ravenous birds of prey will, this day, find your head rolling in the dust and you will lie stretched on the field of battle, then vultures will drink your heart's blood to quench their thirst, and when you will fall the birds will peck into your entrails as Garura feeds upon the snakes."

Thus reprimanding Ravan with harsh words, Ram began to shower arrow on Ravan. All the mysteries of the weapons and their application began to revive in his memory and his swiftness increased with his enthusiasm.

Having perceived all these auspicious signs in himself Ram began to strike Ravan with greater energy and strength. Ravan being smitten by Ram's arrows and by the stones and rocks hurled by the Vanaras became exhausted and weak. Then, Ram had no more enthusiasm to destroy Ravan at that time.¹ But Ravan's charioteer fearing that Ravan might die from the arrows already received hurried him away from the field of battle.

¹ It is only possible for Ram to let off such an enemy, because he was exhausted in fighting.

CHAPTER LXX

THE GREAT MANTRA

After a short time, when Ravan regained his consciousness, he turned towards the charioteer with angry eyes and said, "you fool! Am I weak or infirm? Have I no valour or might? Have I no strength or vigour? Am I coward? Has the Rakshasi power of magic deserted me? Am I not versed in the use of arms, that you are doing things at your will by slighting me altogether? Why have you without knowing my intention turned back the chariot from the presence of my enemy? O, thou mean fellow! It is on account of you that my reputation and value have been spoiled. You have, this day, completely broken peoples' faith in my prowess. You have proved myself a coward before that enemy of mine to whom I should appear as an invincible hero. You fool! Since you are not taking me back to the field of battle, it appears that you have been bribed by my enemy what thou hast done is not worthy of a friend, but of a foe. You have been all along maintained by me, if you have any grateful memory for this service then hurry me back soon to the battle field before the enemy retires.

The gentle charioteer hearing these harsh expressions of foolish Ravan, entreatingly said "O Rakshasa chief I am neither afraid, nor without feelings of gratitude. Your adversary has not bribed me, nor I have forgotten your kind services, but to speak the truth, I have acted thus for your welfare and reputation. So you should not accuse me, as you would do in the case of a low born, selfish fellow. Just listen to me, why I have turned back the chariot from the field, as the waters of the streams rush back when the sea swells. I found you to be exhausted and weaker than your adversary, my steeds were bathed in sweat like cattle drenched in rain, and they were disabled by fatigue. Besides, the signs

that were seen during the fight were not favourable to us. "O King! A charioteer should be careful in good many things. He must have a clear idea about time, place, auspicious and inauspicious signs, of want of enthusiasm, as well as of despair. He should have also knowledge about the height or depth of a level, time of assault, and should find out the weak points of the enemy. He should also know when to appear with the chariot, when to stop and when to retire. I did not leave the battlefield thoughtlessly or willingly. O King! this act is due to my love for you, now I await your orders and shall do what you will ask me to perform."

Thereupon, Ravan fell satisfied and after praising him duly in his eagerness for fight, said, O, charioteer! Soon take back the chariot to the field of battle. Ravan will not desist before slaying his enemy."

With these words, Ravan presented him the ornaments of his arms. The charioteer then drove back the chariot swiftly to battle-field.

Then the great saint Agasthya came to witness the fight with the denizens of heaven. He appeared before Ram and said, "My boy! By viriue of which you will be able to conquer your enemy, I shall cite that Aditya Hridaya prayer to you. This prayer is highly sacred and most secret, and destroys all foes. It brings about all good and absolves all sins. All sorrows and anxieties are removed by it and one attains longevity and salvation at the end."¹

"My boy! The sun is endowed with rays and he rises every day. He is worshipped by the gods and the Asuras. He is the lord of the world, pray to him."

"He embodies the essence of all gods and is full of

1 The belief that Ram Chandra introduced the Durga-Puja, that is celebrated in the beginning of Autumn by worshipping the Goddess at that time for the destruction of Ravan, finds no countenance in the Ramayan. This fact has been mentioned in another Puran, Brahma, at night, invoked the Spirit of Goddess Durga, she appeared in the bright fortnight before Ram and Lakshman and encouraged them to fight and on the night Navami she struck down Ram.

energy and vigour. He reveals all things by his rays and supports all, the gods and the Asuras, by them. He is Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Skanda and Prajapati. He is Indra, Vasu and Sadhyas. He is the twin Aswanikumar wind and Manu. He is fire, life, creature and the author of seasons.¹ He is Aditya, Surjya, Sabita, Khaga, Pusha, and Gabhantiman. He is Hiromyarita and the maker of the day. He is the master of seven yellow steeds² endowed with heat and light. He is the destroyer of all darkness, Sambhu, Visakarma, Martanda and Ansuman. He is full of fire, and the son of Aditi. He is the ruler of the sky, the destroyer of all darkness and the object of proof in the three vedas.³ He is the originator of the world and moves fast in his orbit. He is Atapi, Pingal, Death and the destroyer of everything. He is poet, blood and energy of the universe and a final cause of all events. He is the lord of all planets and stars. He is the most vigorous amongst the vigorous and has twelve souls.¹ Bow down to him. He is the Eastern hills and the western hills. He is Jayabhadra and the formidable hero. He is the object of attainment of the sound of Omkar. He blooms the lotus, and he is fearless. He is the lord of Brahma. Vishnu and Siva. He is wisdom, the destroyer of ignorance and the consumer of everything. He is of dreadful image and the vanquisher of all enemies. His nature is infallible.

He is the universal witness and the smitter of the ungrateful and he is golden Hari. He is the creator and destoryer of all elements. He draws water by his rays

1 The above verse is apparently of Vedic nature and it refers no doubt to the Almighty creator who pervades the creation in various forms, and is worshipped under various names.

2 Steeds apparently refer to the seven elementary colours of the sun's light.

3 Generally speaking, the Vedas are four in number, but it has been mentioned as three because the Atharva veda is a later addition to the existing Rig, Sam and Yuyur.

1 In the legendary astronomy of the Hindus there is mention of twelve suns in the sky, all the twelve will rise on the day of the universal Dissolution.

and pours it back as rains. He rouses the creatures every morning from their sleep. He is the bestower of rewards to the Agnihotras. He is the God of sacrifice, the sacrifice itself and the fruit of sacrifice. He brings about all that happiness in the world and among the created beings, O! Ram, he who is overcome with fear of death, disease and stands in fear of being robbed, when prays to this Sun-god, is not be vanquished. Now, you pray with concentrated mind and devotion this Lord of Universe. If you repeat this Adityahridaya prayer for three times, you will be victorious and be able to destroy Ravana at this moment."

With these words, the great saint Agasthya retired to his hermitage, Ram, too, became confident of Ravana's death and cheerfully cherished the Mantra in his heart.

CHAPTER LXXI.

THE RENEWED STRUGGLE

In the mean time, the chrioteer of Ravan proceeded cheerfully with the chariot to the field of battle. That chariot looked like the wonderful city of the Gandharvas. It was fully equipped with fighting weapons and was decorated with flag-staffs and streamers and it was yoked with excellent black steeds of spirited mettle, adorned with golden chains. Its sight encouraged one's own side and struck terror into the hearts of the enemy. Its very height seemed to threaten the sky.

The chariot, bright as the sun, seemed to burn with its own effulgence. The chariot from distance looked like

a mass of clouds, with streamers like lighting and rainbow. Arrows discharged from it like rains and it came rumbling like a clap of thunder that splits the mountain.

Then Ram taking up a bow, curved like a second moon and stretching it said to Matuli.

"Look! How fast Ravan is coming towards me. As he is proceeding towards my right, it is evident that he intends to kill me. Now, be careful. As the wind drives away the rising cloud, I shall destroy him this day. Drive the chariot without any fear before him. Keep your eyes upon the horses and be careful about the reins. You are the charioteer of the king of gods Indra, do not think I am trying to teach the art of a charioteer, but I am simply reminding you of that."

Thereupon, Matuli cheerfully drove the chariot through the cloud of dusts raised by the chariot wheels of Ravan. At that, Ravan grew exceedingly angry and with red-hot eyes began to shower arrows upon Ram. Ram also took up a formidable bow and sharp arrows. Then each being resolved to kill his adversary, the two warriors challenged each other like two angry lions. Saints and denizens of heaven began to pray for Ram's victory and the destruction of Ravan, and they all assembled to witness the terrible duel.

Various kinds of evil portents were then seen presaging the fall of Ravan and the rise of Ram. The Gods began to rain blood upon Ravan's chariot and a fierce tornado began to sweep towards the left. Vultures hovered in the sky over Ravan's chariot. The city of Lanka was set ablaze in a blood-red twilight, and during the day, it looked as a deep scarlet flower like the Java. There were constant lightning in the sky and meteors fell in showers. Even there was earthquake where Ravan's chariot stood. The Sun's rays of various colours fell before Ravan's chariot and the ground appeared to be tinged with minerals. Jackals following the vultures began to howl fiercely, vomiting fire from their jaws. Winds on all sides raised dusts and blinded Ravan's eyes, even the sky grew dark with them.

Thunders fell upon the heads of the Rakshasas though there were no clouds in the sky. Birds charring in harsh tones flocked to Ravan's chariot, sparks of fire began to fly from the hoofs of the horses and tears trickled down their eyes. Various kinds of such evil omens were seen on all sides of Ravan. The Rakshasas engaged in fighting became greatly dejected at these and their hands were paralysed with fear. Than Matuli thought that the hour of Ravan's death was near. Ram also seeing auspicious signs of victory on his side, grew cheerful and was eager to display his prowess.

Then a terrible duel ensued between Ram and Ravan. The Rakshasas and the Vanaras stood still with weapons in their hands and in great amazement and anxiety they watched the struggle between the two and they gave up their endeavours of attacking one another. The Rakshasas in wonder looked at Ravan and the Vanaras at Ram, and they appeared as if so many painted figures. Every thing appeared to be auspicious to Ram and every thing inauspicious to Ravan. Both the heroes fought fearlessly in the fury of their wrath. Both Ram and Ravan became anxious to display their utmost skill and prowess; Ravan for his death and Ram for victory.

Heroic Ravan discharged his shaft at the flag of Ram, but it fell on the ground by grazing only the side of it. Then Ram discharged his arrow at the flag staff of Ravan and the flag staff at once fell on the ground being cut to pieces. Thereupon, heroic Ravan in great anger pierced the chargers of Ram, but his arrows could not stop their course, nor could produce any deep effect on them, on the contrary they seemed to be struck by so many stalks of the lotuses! Ravan at that sight grew more furious and began to hurl maces, parighas, mushalas, chakras and other weapons at them; and the battle-field grew dreadful for those arms.

Then, Ravan with great violence fell upon the Vanaras and began to rain incessant shafts on them. Ram, too, with a smiling countenance began to discharge arrows at Ravan. On account of the arrows discharged

by both the warriors, a second bright sky seemed to form under the canopy of heaven. The shafts of both the heroes were irresistible and capable to hit their aims and to frustrate the other's arrows. All those arrows fell on the ground clashing against one another. Ram and Ravan began to discharge shafts incessantly stationing themselves on the right and on the left of each other. Ram pierced Ravan's horses and Ravan those of Ram. Thus the field of battle grew fearful by the attacks and counter attacks of the two.

Then heroic Ram cut down the flag-staff of Ravan into pieces, Ravan in furious rage began to discharge arrows against Ram. Every one in amazement watched that dreadful fight between the two.

The great warriors rushed against each other in exceeding wrath, and each one attempted to effect another's death. Their charioteers showed utmost skill by their clever movements of the chariots and both the chariots having shafts incessantly discharged from them appeared like two raining clouds,

Ram and Ravan after some circuitous movements again faced each other and began to fight desperately. During that fight both the heroes drew so close to each other that the pole of one's chariot touched that of the other and the heads of one's horses brushed against those of the other. In the meantime, Ram quickly took up four sharp arrows and cut down four horses of Ravan. Thereupon, Ravan showered sharp arrows upon Ram, but Ram, though wounded by them, was not the least moved by them. On the contrary, Ram with redoubled energy began to fight with Ravan and hurled thunder-bolt-like arms against him.

Then Ravan struck Matali with some shafts, but Matali was not the least affected by them. On account of Matali's hurt Ram grew more furious and to prevent Ravan from striking Matali, began to rain shafts on Ravan and also on his chariot. Ravan, too, in anger began to strike Ram with maces and mushalas. By degrees the fight between the two grew exceedingly fearful. By the ringing of the arms and by the buzzing sound produced by the feathers attached to the arrows, the seven seas were disturbed.

In the meantime, the denizens of heaven got frightened by that fearful fight. "May good befall on Brahmins and cows and may Ravan fall at the hands of Ram" thus prayed the Gods. At the sight of that dreadful contest the Gandharvas and Nymphs said among themselves. "The sky can only be compared with itself, the ocean with its ownself likewise the fight between Ram and Ravan is without a parallel and can only be compared to itself and to nothing else.

Shortly after, Ram grow exceedingly enraged and cut down Ravan's head by aiming a terrible shaft like a dreadful snake. The inhabitants of the three worlds saw that Ravan's head was actually rolling on the ground, but immediately another head grew up in its place! Ram in quick hand again cut the same, but another head again sprang up in its place. Thus though Ram cut down hundred heads of Ravan, but still Ravan did not die!

Then, Ram skilled in all sorts of arms thought within him, "certainly, these are the same arrows that once destroyed Maricha, Dhushan and Khara; that killed Viradha in the cave in the Krambeba woods; that destroyed Kavan-dha in the Dandaka forest; that pierced through the seven palm trees in a time, that slew Vali and agitated the ocean, but how is it that they become frustrated by coming in contact with Ravan's body?

Having failed to understand this mystery, Ram became greatly anxious, but he did not slacken his endeavours in any way to destroy Ravan. Ram began to strike incessantly against Ravan's breast. Ravan too grow furious at that and began to hurl maces, mushala against Ram. The fight thickened between the two. The denizens of heaven watched the fight between the two day and night. The fight continued day and night without any respite or inter-mission.

CHAPTER LXXII

THE FALL OF RAVAN

Then the heavenly charioteer, Matali, said to Ram. "It seems you are anxious about the destruction of Ravan without knowing any thing about it. Now, discharge the Brahma weapon. The time that has been appointed for the destruction of Ravan has arrived."

As soon Matali reminded Ram of this, Ram took up divine Brahmastra, which formerly Prajapati the creator of the three worlds gave to Indra for the conquest of the three worlds. After that Ram got it from sage Agastya. On the two wings of that weapon was seated the wind, on the blade the sun and the fire, in the body the great sky (ether) and in weight and heaviness the Sumeru and the Mandara hills seemed to weigh upon it. It was created with the essence of all elements. It was burning with its own effulgence, it was smeared with fat and blood. It looked like Doom's-day fire covered with smoke. It was dreadful to look at and was hard and deep-sounding like a thunder-bolt. By its power, men, beasts, birds, snakes, and all fortifications were pounded into pieces. It was dreadful like an angry snake and formidable like Death himself. By its very sight the Vanaras and the Rakshasas got dejected.

Heroic Ram then with due Mantras of the Veda fixed it to his bow. No sooner it was fixed the earth began to quake and all the creatures were struck with terror. Ram in great anger discharged it at Ravan. As soon as that dreadful shaft was discharged with great speed it fell upon Ravan ; it pierced his heart into two and entered the earth after depriving Ravan of his life.* Bow and arrow slipped

* Our readers must have followed carefully the epic development of Ravan's character. He is indeed a really great creation in the history of art. A mighty King, whose sway was acknowledged by all kings and princes, whom the gods held in awful respect. An invincible conqueror, con-

from Ravan's hands, and he fell down from the chariot with a mighty crash like Vritrasura struck by the thunderbolt. In the meantime the Brahma weapon after executing out its work, again entered into the quiver of Ram.

Then the remnants of Ravan's army fled away in fear of their lives. Thereupon the Vanaras fell upon the Rakshasas with trees and branches in their hands, The Rakshasas were thus routed and scattered in different directions, and they entered the city with tearful eyes.

The Vanaras then roared in delight and cried victory to Ram. Sweet music was heard above. Sweet and scented breeze began to blow around, Rare flowers were showered upon the chariot of Ram. The gods began to sing praise of Ram in the sky. They were exceedingly glad at the death of Ravan, the terror of the three worlds.

By the grace of heroic Ram, the desires of Sugriva, Angada and Vibhishan were fulfilled. All were delighted at Ravan's death. The sky grew clear the sun became bright, and the earth an abode of peace.

Then Sugriva, Vibhishan, Angada and Lakshman in their respective order paid their honour and tribute to Ram and sang the praise of his victory. Then Ram surrounded by his friends and followers, appeared like Indra encircled by the gods in heaven.

quered at last by his own unconquerable impulses which alienated Bivishan and created an ally of Ram.

CHAPTER LXXIII

LAMENTATIONS

Then Vibhishan seeing his brother, Ravan, fallen on the field, began to lament with a sorrowful heart.

"O hero ! Costly bed is worthy of you, then why do you lie prostrate on the ground stretching forth your listless arms ? My heart rends with sorrow seeing your jewelled diadem rolling on the dust. You did not pay heed to what I said to you before through your lust and desire. But my words have, at last, come to be fulfilled. Prahasta, Indrajit, Cumbhakarna, Atikaya, Narantaka and yourself did not listen to my words, out of your pride but, alas ! they have been fulfilled. Alas ! The shelter of the virtuous ; the image of righteousness, and the protector of the valiant is gone. You have attained the supreme end of the heroes, but we are stricken with sorrow."

"Alas ! (By your fall) it seems the sun has fallen on the ground ; the moon is sunk in darkness ; the fire is extinct, and the cause of popular religion is gone forever.

O hero ! Since you lie here prostrate on the ground, meseems there is no other Rakshasa living in the city of Lanka. You lie like a great tree having fortitude for its leaves, energy for flowers meditation for fruits, and prowess for its roots, now torn up by the root by fearful storm that came in the form of Ram.

Alas ! This day, Ravan has been slain by Ram, as an infuriated elephant having valour for its tusks pride of rank for the backbone, and contentment for its trunk, by a lion in the form of Ram. Fire like Ravan, having prowess and energy for its flame, angry sighs for smoke, and might for its burning power, has been extinguished by cloud-like Ram. The bull-like Ravan has been killed by tiger-like Ram. The tail, hump and horns of this bull the Rakshasas, and restless energy were his eyes and ears. He was swift as the wind invincible of all."

Finding Vibhishan lamenting thus, Ram said, "O hero ! This Lord of the Rakshasas have not fallen like one weak

and exhausted, but he was formidable and fearless of death up to his end. He has been accidentally slain. Those Kshatriyas who seek for glory can never be wretched by embracing death on the field of battle* you should not lament over the death of that warrior who put even Indra to flight in battle. Besides, there is no such law that one will always be crowned with victory, either he will destroy his enemies, or fall in the hands of his foes, this is the duty of Kshatriyas that has been prescribed by the sages of the past. It is quite improper to lament the death of this Kshatriya, and it is also inconsistent with the shastras. Remove your sorrows thinking of this and just think what is to be done now."

Then Vibhishan said with a sorrowful heart, "Ram ! Thou hast slain today him whom even the gods could not conquer before. This hero had granted more than what was asked of him, he supported his dependents and friends most liberally ; he enjoyed everything that was precious or delicious. He contributed to the prosperity of his friends and to the destruction of his enemies. He was well versed in the vedas and vedantas, a great Yogi and was chief amongst the performers of Agnihotra sacrifice and other rites. Now, if you permit I may perform his funeral rites."*

Ram was deeply sorry at these words of Vibhishan and with a sad heart said, Enmity ends with death. Our end has been gained, now perform his funeral rites. Know that Ravan was dear to me as he was to you."

Afterwards the Rakshasa women hearing of Ravan's death came out of the city-gate in over-whelming grief. Though they were repeatedly prevented from going out, yet they did not pay heed to any kind of dissuasion, but they ran like cattle as if deprived of their young ones. They were stumbling on earth and their long tresses were kissing the dusts.

Those Rakshasa women emerged from the Northern gate and arrived at the field of battle, and they began to roam about the place strewn with dead bodies, maddened with blood calling him as their worshipful lord. Being

* Now our contention is quite clear that Ravan could not be a non-Aryan as the popular belief goes.

overwhelmed with sorrow, with tearful eyes they searched for their common lord, and descried from distance, the great and formidable Ravan of collyrium hue, was lying dead on the field of battle. They fell upon his body, like so many creepers uprooted by storm, some embraced him with respectful look. Some began to cry taking his arms or feet in their hands. Some raised his arms and threw herself on the ground, some fainted looking at the face. Some one took his head on her lap and began to shed incessant tears on it, and his face looked like a lotus covered with icicles. Every one cried disconsolately at Ravan's death. They set up piteous lamentations, saying, Alas ! He who at one time conquered Indra, Yama and captured the Puspaka chariot from Kuvera now lies dead on the field of battle. He who was not the least afraid of Gods and demons or of the turagas has, at last, met with his death at the hands of a human being ! He who was invincible of the Gods and Asuras has been slain by a mortal man who treads the earth on two legs. He whom even the Gods could not destroy, has been killed by an ordinary man."

"O King ! Without listening to the words of the well-wishers you had stolen Sita for your death and for the destruction and ruin of us all. What good advice was not given to you by your brother Vibhishan, but for your own death and ruin, you provoked his wrath. If you returned Janaki to Ram then such disasters would not have befallen us, then Vibhishan would have remained a friend, and we would not have been widowed by this time, and the desires of the enemies would, not have been thus fulfilled. But to your evil luck you used force against Sita, this is why you have brought about destruction upon you and all the Rakshasas. Or why should we blame you ? It is Fate that brings about every thing ; a man never dies unless Fate slays him down. The death of innumerable Vanaras and Rakshasas are due to fate. A man cannot avert his impending fate by money, by his will, by his valour or by his command."

Thus the consorts of Ravan wept bitterly in sorrow.

CHAPTER LXXIV

MANDODARI'S LAMENTS

In the meantime, Mandodari, the chief of the beloved queens of Ravan, began to lament bitterly in heart-rending sorrow. "O Lord! When you were angry, even Indra could not approach you then. All ran away in fear of you. Alas! Thou art defeated today by an ordinary man! Don't you feel ashamed at this? What is this? once you conquered the three worlds by your prowess, but this day you have been slain by a humble human being who lived, in exile in the forest! You could assume different forms at will and this city of Lanka, inaccessible to all, was your abode still you have been slain by an ordinary man! It appears like an impossible feat. Perhaps Death himself for your destruction came in the form of Ram and threw his fatal spell when you were off your guard. Or perhaps Indra has killed you; but this too doesn't seem probable Indra cannot dare to face you in battle. Or it may be that who is omniscient, who is above birth, death and infirmities of age, who is great amongst the greatest, who is the Ruler of the universe, who holds in his hand conch shell, discus mace and lotus, who bears in his bosom the mark of Sri-vatsa. who is invincible and unmoved, whose splendour is unalterable and undiminished, who is Almighty, who is truth, who is the Lord of all the worlds, that Vishnu has assumed the form of Ram and with the assistance of gods in the form of the Vanaras has slain you for the welfare of creatures. O Lord! Formerly you conquered the three worlds and for that the gods might have conquered you in return. Alas! When Khara with fourteen thousand Rakshasas were slain in Janasthan then I came to understand that Ram was not an ordinary human being. My mind was ever trembled with misapprehensions since the day Hanuman had entered Lanka inaccessible even to the gods. I told you formerly not to foster hostility but you did not pay any heed to my words. Now this is the result of not listening to those words. You become deeply enamoured of Sita for your destruction with your near and

dear ones."

"Sita is superior to Arundhuti and Rohini in every respect, and you committed a heinous sin by abducting that worshipful woman. Her fortitude is unparalleled she is more forbearing than the earth, and she can stand everything she is more beautiful than boasts herself the splendour of all splendours and highly devoted to her husband. But having brought her from the interior of a dense forest you have been slain with all your brood. You wanted to enjoy Sita, but instead of that desire being fulfilled you have been destroyed by the fire of her chastity. That you were not reduced to ashes by the wrath of Sita when you abducted her, was simply because fire did not venture to approach you for your former prowess. But my Lord! One has to reap the fruits of sin in due time, and its illustration is the happiness of Vibhishan and this sad calamity of yours. O Lord! you had many women more beautiful than Sita, but for your infatuation and lust you could not understand that. Sita is in no way comparable to me in beauty, or in pride of rank, but you failed to realise that in your ignorance and lust. Nobody dies without a cause, and Sita is the cause of your death. You did yourself court your death. Hence forward Sita, free from all sorrows, will pass her time in happiness with Ram, but this wretched self will be lost in an ocean of sorrow. O valiant hero! How did I pass my time in amorous dalliance with you in Chaitraratha and other heavenly gardens. Being dressed in beautiful apparel I travelled in various countries with you, but with your death all such enjoyments and happiness have come to an end. I have become a widow this day, and now I do realise that royal fortune is unstable."

"O my Lord! Your countenance in brightness was like the sun, in loveliness like the moon, and in beauty was like the lotus; what fair skin, high brow, fine nose did you possess? How were adorned with jewelled crown and shining ear-rings? Your restless eyes were charming to look at, and what a winning smile adorned your lips when you talked. Alas! That beauty of the countenance is now gone and it has grown quite dark. It is smeared with blood drawn by Ram's arrows and rendered rough by dusts raised by the wheels of the chariot. Alas! I am most unfortu-

nate, and what I never even dreamt have come to pass. I have become a widow. I had great pride in my mind that my father was the king of the Danavas, my husband was the lord of the Rakshasas, and my son was the conqueror of Indra. I had a great sense of security and had great confidence on the prowess of my protectors. But, alack, in spite of such formidable prowess of you how could an ordinary human being be a menace to us all?"

"My lord, your body is tall like a cliff of mellowed hue like that of Sapphire, and it was adorned with various kinds of ornaments, and that was beautiful in amorous sports and quite formidable in the field of battle. Your person with the sheen of various ornaments appeared like a cloud glistening with lightning; it is now bristling with arrows and smeared with blood, and though its touch is so covetable to me, yet I cannot embrace it. Alas! sharp arrows have pierced your heart and have stained it with blood. Alas! Thou liest stretched like a cliff cleft by lightning. Alas! my lord! It is like it was more strange than a dream that you would die at the hands of Ram, but that strange thing has come to be true! You are the death of Death, then, how could you come under its sway? Thou wert lord of the three worlds, all their riches belonged to you, thou art the terror of all beings, thou wert the vanquisher of all, and thou didst even conquer Mahadeva. Thou didst humble the pride of the haughty. Thou wert the protector of your dependents and followers and slayer of the brave. Thou didst conquer the gods and Danavas and the Nibat Kavachas. You did destroy many a sacrifice and ablated by force the daughters of gods, Asuras and of men from various places. Thou wert the cause of grief to your enemys' wives and leader of your followers. Thou wert the protector of Lanka and didst perform many a formidable deed. You did maintain us in all sorts of luxury, but seeing you slain by the shafts of Ram, it appears that my heart is made of adamantine rock. My lord, you were wont to lie on costly beds, why do you now roll in the dust? I was smitten with intense grief the day when Lakshman slew my son, Indrajit, but this day I am ruined for good. I shall now lead a friendless and destitute life of sorrow and be forever plunged in the ocean of grief. Thou hast set forth along an unknown path, but why dost thou not take me as your

companion? I shall not live without you, Why do you go alone leaving me behind?"

"This ill-starrred, wretched self is bitterly lamenting for thee, but why don't you console her at all? Don't you be angry seeing me thus unveiled and coming on foot up to the city-gate? Look, the veils of your queens, that did protect them from shame, have slipped from them, yet you didn't feel provoked by the sight! I am your companion in amorous sports, but why don't you caress me in love, seeing me thus overwhelmed with sorrow? Those chaste and devoted women whom you rendered widows, surely cursed you with their tearful eyes, that is why thou hast been slain by your enemy. Certainly their curse has come to be fulfilled this day. It is said, that something evil must happen if the tears of a devoted wife fall on earth, and this proverb has proved to be true in your case."

"O my king! Thou wert a great warrior, thou didst conquer the three worlds, how could, you then persuade yourself to steal another's wife? Why did you abduct Janaki by decoying away Ram and Lakshman, presenting form of a golden fawn? The past, present and the future were known to you, you were never afraid of battle, then why did you act like that? This shows that your end was nigh. What your truthful, younger brother sorrowfully remarked at the sight of Janaki, alas! has, at last, come to be true. This calamity is, alack, due to your own passions. You are the cause of the ruin of the Rakshasa clan. Nay, thou hast repaired to heaven with thy achievements and failings, you are not to be blamed; it is my womanly nature that accuses you who were not to be daunted. It is due to the defective understanding of a woman that I grieve for thee and lament thy loss. Alas! Why did you not listen to the words of your sincere friends and well-wishers? In your pride of prowess you did not pay heed to the words of Kumbhakarna and of my father, hence, this calamity has befallen thee. Oh, my lord! You were dark, but how beautiful you looked when you did put on yellow robe and golden armlets on your arms, but, alas, dost thou now lie stretched in a pool of blood! Why don't you greet me to-day? I am the daughter of the famous Rakshasa, Sumati. O king! Why dost

thou lie so low? You were wont to slay your enemies by that Parigha too dazzling for naked eyes. It was hard as a thunderbolt wrought with gold and was adorned with garlands, but now lies on the ground broken into pieces! My lord! Thou dost lie on the ground embracing the battlefield as your beloved darling, wherefore you do you not care to talk to this neglected self? Cursed be my heart that it does not as yet break into pieces with sorrow, seeing you thus destroyed before my eyes."

The Rakshasa queen, Mandodari, thus bitterly lamenting the loss of her husband fainted on the bosom of her dead lord. Then, she appeared like a flash of lightning illumining a bank of scarlet clouds. Then her co-wives being extremely grieved at this heart-rending sight, gently raised her from the bosom of her lord and tried to console her with their words, "O worshipful lady! Don't you know that a created being is mortal? Don't you know that at the decline of virtue, royal fortune bids adieu and leaves the kingdom?"

With these words, the queens of Ravan encircled Mandodari and cried aloud. Their cheeks and breasts were bathed with tears.

CHAPTER LXXV

THE FUNERAL

In the meantime, Ram said to Vibbishan. "Do thou cremate the body of Ravan and console his wives."

Then, intelligent Vibbishan having thought over the matter very carefully, humbly submitted to Ram in words consistent with religion. "O, Ram! It is not proper for me to cremate the body of a person polluted with the crime of abduction of another's wife. This king of the Rakshasas bent on evil, was my enemy in the form of a brother. Though in position and age he was to be honoured by me, but he was not worthy of my respect. O Ram! I disagree to burn his body.* Perhaps the people of the world will call me cruel, but if they know the whole truth instead of blaming me, they will justify my conduct."

At these words, Ram was highly pleased and said, O Rakshasa chief, "It is due to thy endeavours that I have won the victory, it is, therefore, meet that I should do something pleasant to you, and in this connection, I shall tell you every thing that I have to say on this point. You see, though the Rakshasa king, Ravan, was irreligious and of wicked character, yet he was a mighty hero. I have heard that even Indra and other gods could not conquer him. Enmity extends up to death and not further.† Our goal has been achieved by his death. You do now cremate his body. He is now to me, as is to you. You can cremate his body with due rites according to the dictates of religion. Surely you will gain reputation by this act."

Thereupon, Vibbishan came forward for the cremation of Ravan's body and entering the city of Lanka, he released

* Thank God that brothers like Vibbishan are still rare in the world, but one is enough to disgrace the whole race.

† Mark the magnanimity of the above expression. The great Carthagen General, Hannibal, though conducted a

the Agnihotra priests for this purpose. Then he sent forth chariots, priests, fire, sandal wood, scented Aguru, and and scented things. He also sent a large quantity of pearls and gems. Then he came forth with other Rakshasas and became engaged in the act of cremation.

Then, the Rakshasa Brahmans with tearful eyes dressed Ravan with a piece of red silken cloth and placed his body on a golden bier. The bards began to sing Ravan's praise aloud along with the trumpets' notes; and all raised the bier decorated with flowers and flags and proceeded towards the south. Vibhishan proceeded at the head and the priests followed with fire deposited in vessels. Ladies of the palace followed carrying in quick paces, but in faltering gait, on account of the want of the habit of walking.

All then arrived at the cremation ground and placed the bier on a sacred spot. The funeral pyre was duly prepared according to the injunctions of the Vedas with red and white sandal woods, Ushir grass and Padmaka, and over that a deer skin coverlet was spread. Then ceremony of the worship of the ancestors was duly performed. The Brahmans built an altar at the south-eastern corner of the funeral pyre and kindled fire on it. Then, curd and ghee were poured on the shoulders of Ravan, all funeral rites were duly performed. A sacred animal was sacrificed, a coverlet was made of its fat, with which Ravan's face was covered, his body was decorated with garlands of flowers, and then all with sorrowful hearts threw fried rice on his body. Then Vibhishan set fire to the body. After the body was reduced to ashes, he performed the due funeral rites with oil mingled with grass. He consoled the women and asked them to go back. After their departure, Vibhishan humbly returned to Ram.

As Indra was delighted at the destruction of Vritrasura, so Ram felt delighted by slaying Ravan. Ram then put off the bow and armour offered by Indra and with that his wrath and thus assumed a gentle air.

wrothless campaign against Rome, was always magnanimous and noble in his dealings with the dead generals of Rome. See "Marcellus and Hannibal"—by W. S. Landor.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

THE CORONATION OF VIBHISHAN.

The gods, Gandharvas and the Danavas having found Ravan slain, returned to their respective places and in their journey they talked of Ravan's valour, the military skill of the Vanaras, Sita's devotion and various other similar things. Ram then permitted Matuli to go back to heaven with his fiery chariot.

Ram then embraced Sugriva in joy. The Vanaras praised greatly the prowess of Ram. Lakshman greeted Ram and, Ram told him, "My boy! place Vibhishan on the throne of Lanka. He is greatly devoted to me and has helped me greatly."

Lakshman was exceedingly glad at Ram's words and handing over golden pitchers to the Vanaras, he asked them to fetch sea-water for the investiture ceremony and the quick Vanaras instantly brought waters of the seven seas.*

Lakshman then made Vibhishan seated upon an excellent seat and with the help of his friends he performed the investiture ceremony with that water. The Rakshasas and the Vanaras joined in the coronation ceremony. Vibhishan thus became the king of Lanka. His friends and followers were greatly pleased at that, and began to praise Ram. Ram and Lakshman too were greatly delighted.

Vibhishan after consoling the people appeared before Ram. The citizens presented Ram curd, fresh sweets, fried rice and flowers. Vibhishan offered those auspicious things to Ram and Lakshman. Noble Ram accepted them considering that he had achieved success.

Then Ram said to Hanuman, "O thou noble one! With Vibhishan's leave go to Lanka and ascertain how Janaki is keeping now. After assuring her of the welfare of Sugriva, Lakshman and of myself, tell her that Ravan has been slain in battle O hero! Give this welcome news to Janaki and come back soon with her reply."

* Sapta Sindhu—apparently originally meant the river Indus (Sindhu) with its tributaries that watered the plain of the Punjab, the tract known to the earliest Aryan settlers of India.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

SITA'S JOYS.

Hanuman being thus commanded by Ram took Vibbisan's leave and entered the city of Lanka. Hanuman then arrived at the garden house. He was known to Janaki from before.

On arriving there he found Janaki dark like the star Rohini in fear of Rahu, and her lustre dimmed for want of toilet. She was seated under a tree surrounded by the Rakshasis on all sides.

Hanuman humbly approached her and stood motionless after greeting her with proper respect. Janaki could not recognise her at the first sight, so she at first remained silent, but when she recognised him she grew cheerful in her heart.

When Hanuman found that Janaki had recognised him, he said, "O worshipful lady! Ram has enquired about your well-being. Ram! Lakshman and Sugriva are all doing well. Noble Ram with the help of the Vanara army and of Vibhisan, has slain Ravan in battle. He is now enemyless and has attained his goal. O worshipful lady! I deliver to you this happy news and let me repeat that Ram has attained victory, and that is simply due to you. The great enemy has been vanquished and Lanka has been occupied. Ram has sent you word that he crossed the sea with the determination of conquering the enemies. Don't be afraid because you are in Ravan's place. Be comforted, I have vested the kingdom of Lanka on Vibhishan, you are now in your own house. O noble lady! Vibhishan too will surely pay you a visit."

Beautiful Janaki having heard all these from Hanuman's mouth, could not make any reply on account of her excessive joy.

Finding Janaki thus silent, Hanuman asked, "O worshipful lady! What are you thinking about? Why don't you speak anything in reply to my words?"

Thereupon, devoted Janaki said with a voice choked with the excessive emotion of joy. "My boy! The happy news of my husband's victory robbed me of my power of speech, I don't find anything worthy of you to reward you for this happy news, I find nothing on earth that I can think sufficient for this, that I may feel satisfied by giving that to you. Gold and all the riches of of the three worlds can not be an adequate reward for this joyful news."

Hanuman was greatly delighted at these words of Janaki and submitted in joined hands. "O worshipful lady! you are ever well-wisher of your husband and always act to please him. Such words are only worthy of you. To listen to such and noble words from you is worth more than gold and jewels, and even more covetable than heaven. O noble lady! Since you now find Ram victorious and devoid of anxiety, it is indeed a heaven to me."

Janaki said, "Hanuman! Thou alone canst speak sweet and intelligent things like this. Thou art the praiseworthy son of Pavan, and thou art virtuous. Valour, strength, wisdom, learning, generosity, forgiveness, energy, patience, modesty and other noble virtues exist in you."

Hanuman was greatly delighted by these words, but not being elated with praise, he humbly said, "These Raksbasis have threatened you all these days, if you wish, I may destroy them all. They are grim looking and I have heard that they have oppressed you very much at the commands of Ravan. I wish to kill them as I like. Kindly give me your consent for this."

Then said Janaki, always sorry for the distressed "O hero! Who can be angry against those who act at another's command and only carry out others' wishes. They are dependents of the king and are obedient to him. I have been suffering on account of my bad luck due to the deeds done in my prior birth. In fact, I am, suffering for my own fate. So you should not talk of their death. This is my fore-ordained fate and I know

it from before. I forgive them with all my heart. They used to tyrannise over me at Ravan's commands. Now he has been slain, they will not behave with me in that manner. Listen to me what once a bear said to a tiger.* "A wise man never punishes a person who commits wrong at the instigation of another."

In fact, it is desirable to observe this a rule everywhere. Character is the ornament of the virtuous. A respectable man (Aryan) always hates a sinner and a condemned person. To speak the truth every one is guilty of transgressions of one kind or another, so forgiveness is always commendable. You should not punish even them whose nature is cruel and are born villains, those who delight in doing injury to others.†

Hanuman replied, O worshipful lady ! you are indeed a worthy spouse of Ram. In nobility and accomplishments, you equal Ram in all respects. Now, permit me to return to Ram."

Thereupon, Janaki said, "O gentle one ! I want to see my husband, the protector of the devotees."

Hanuman then said to the delight of Janaki. "O noble lady ! This day you will see the beautiful

* The story runs like this; Once a fowler being pursued by a tiger, climbed a tree on which there was a bear. The tiger told the bear from beneath the tree. "The fowler is our common enemy, throw him down." The bear said that he could not do that because the fowler was under his protection. The tiger then asked the man to push down the sleeping bear, the fowler agreed to this and pushed the bear, but the bear as he buried his claws in the tree, did not fall. Thereupon, the tiger asked the bear to throw down the fowler as he had acted wrongly against the bear. But the bear nobly said, though the fowler is guilty, yet I can not hand him over to you."

† Such words were uttered by Christ alone. Is there any wonder then that Sita is looked upon as the greatest ideal of womanhood ?

faces of Ram and Lakshman. Ram is now free from enemies and is possessed of permanent friends. As Sachi meets Indra, the king of the gods, so you will meet him to-day."

Thus saying, Hanuman bowed to Sita, the image of Lakshmi and returned to Ram.

CHAPTER LXXVIII

THE MEETING

Then, Hanuman appeared before noble Ram and said, "O king! for whom you have bridged the ocean and performed all these great deeds, it is desirable to see that Janaki. That worshipful lady bathed in tears and smitten with grief, after hearing the news of your victory has expressed her desire for seeing you. On account of the former confidence in me, she said, "I want to see my husband." With these words she with tearful eyes stared at me."

At these words, virtuous Ram became deeply absorbed in thoughts. Heaving a deep, hot sigh, addressing dark-skinned, Vibhishan, said, "O Rakshasa king! Soon fetch here Janaki, after giving her a bath and after a change of apparel."

Thereupon, Vibhishan hastily entered Lanka and sent information to Sita by his own wife. Then he himself went there and having joined his palms over his head respectfully observed, "O, worshipful lady! Be all good unto you. Get upon the chariot after adorning your person properly with the best jewels and apparel after toilet. Ram wants to see you."

Sita said, "O Rakshasa chief! I shall go to Ram even without a bath."

Vibhishan said, "It is better to act according to Ram's directions."

Thereupon, Sita, out of her deep devotion and love for Ram, agreed to Vibhishan's proposal and then she took her bath, changed her apparel and got upon a palanquin after decorating her person with ornaments and jewels. Thereupon, Vibhishan proceeded with Sita carried by the palanquin-bearers and with a large number of Rakshasa guards.

Though Ram came to know of Sita's arrival, he was absorbed in deep thoughts. Vibhishan approached him and said, "O hero! Janaki is come." At this news of the arrival of Janaki, so long residing in the Rakshasa house, Ram was overwhelmed with grief, anger and joy at the same moment, and after thinking a while, Ram said, "O Rakshasa king? Let Janaki come near me."

Then virtuous Vibhishan asked all other person to clear from the place. Thereupon, the warders, with turbans on their heads and canes in their hands, dispersed the male warriors from the place. Those that were on guard, petrolled on all sides. The Vanaras, Bhallukas and the Rakshasas left the place in batches. A great tumult arose. Thereupon, Ram grew angry seeing all thus upset by Vibhishan's orders. He felt for their inconvenience and addressing Vibhishan said, "Why do you put these people into unnecessary trouble for a woman? Not to scare away people, is royal pomp. Character is the real protection and ornament of a woman. Besides, it is no offence to see women in distress, disease, in war, in Swayamvara, in sacrifice, and in times of marriage. Now, Sita, has fallen into distress, it is no offence to see her now, specially when she is by my side. So let her get down from the palanquin and come on foot to me. Let the Vanaras see her in my presence."

At these words of Ram, Vibhishan suspected something serious, and respectfully led Sita to Ram. Lakshman, Sugriva, and Hanuman were greatly pained by these words of Ram. Janaki seemed to hide herself in shame. Vibhishan followed her steps. She came near her husband and stared at his face. At the sight of her husband's beautiful face after such a long time, her face beamed in joy like the beautiful moon.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

RAM'S ACCUSATION.

Then, Ram asking Janaki, standing humbly before him, said, "Gentle lady! I have brought you hither after conquering the enemies in war. I have done all what could possibly be done by valour. My anger has been satisfied, and I have avenged my insult. Every body, this day, has witnessed my prowess. I have fulfilled my promise, and I am now clear to my own self. That the fickle-minded Rakshasa stole you in my absence is due to your fate, but I have absolved you from that calumny. He who does not avenge by his own valour the insult offered to him by his enemies, is a mean-minded fellow. This day, the crossing of the sea by heroic Hanuman has been crowned with success; the burning of Lanka and other glorious achievements have been fruitful. This day, the prowess and counsels of Sugriva have been consummated with success, so also the efforts of him who forsaking his worthless brother took up my cause under my shelter."

At these words, Janaki opened wide her eyes bathed in tears. At that time, seeing that lotus-faced beauty

with waving dark curls before him. Ram's heart was smitten with grief, but in fear of public scandal, addressing her before others, Ram said, "In order to take revenge for insult, I have done what a man ought to do, and I have destroyed Ravan under such circumstances. As the great sage Agastya of austere penance freed the southern countries from the terror of Ilval and Vatapi, so I have freed the world from the fear of Ravan. Know it for certain, that it is not for you that I have come to the termination of war with the help of my friends. I have done this for my dignity,* for removing the stain of a scandal, and for the prestige and honour of my renowned family. I have done the deed, just to prove that I do not belong to a mean family. I do now, doubt your character for your stay in a stranger's house. You are standing before me, but your sight is unbearable to me, as light to a man suffering from eye-disease, so I tell you to go wherever you like. I do not want you. Who being born of a noble family, can take back his wife who lived in another's house, simply because she is an object of love? You were molested on Ravan's lap, his sinful eyes gloated over your person, now how can I receive you back, thinking of the noble family from which I come?"

The object for which I have rescued you has been fulfilled, now I have no longer need of you. Go where you please. O noble lady! I say unto you without any hesitation whatsoever, that you can pay your attentions upon. Lakshman, Bharat, Satrughna and Sugriva, or if you like, you may follow Vibhishan.†

* The original expression means for the preservation of my character.

† These expressions are not only cruel, but rude and barbarous to a wife like Sita. Such words do not befit the lips of Ram, even if they were to gauge public opinion and to sound Sita's mind. The character of Ram, as we have already observed before, seems to have undergone a great change from the abduction of Sita by Ravan.

Finding you charming and beautiful and having got you in his house Ravan did not refrain long."

Janaki having heard those angry words of Ram, was smothered with grief, as a creeper is torn off by an elephant's trunk. Having heard all these unheard-of accusations in the presence of such a large number of persons, Janaki became mortally ashamed of her own existence, and she wanted to bury herself within her flesh. Ram's words pierced her heart like a dart. She began to shed a torrent of tears. Then she wiped her tears by the end of her cloth and told Ram in a gentle voice, broken with sobs. "As a low person abuses a low woman, why do you use all such unutterable, rude expressions against me? I am not what you take me to be."

"I can swear about my character, have faith on my honour. Having seen the conduct of low woman, you suspect all women as a class, but that is not proper. If you have any experience of me then give up that unfounded suspicion."

"You see, Ravan touched my body when I was not in my senses. How could I help it? My fate is to be blamed for that, but what was within my control, i. e. my heart, belonged to you. What could I do about my body, that could be subjected by another person, for then I was thoroughly under another's power? I am undone, if you could not as yet know me from my love and from the contact of my soul. When you sent Hanuman for my information, why did you not send me the word that you had renounced me? Then, I could have put an end to my existence even before that Vanara. If it were so, then there would not have been any need for taking such risks to your own self, and your friends could have been spared from all these troubles and sufferings. O King! Being overwhelmed with anger, like a low person, you are thinking me like an ordinary woman. My name is Janaki, because I am connected with Janaka's sacrifice but not because of my birth there, the Earth alone is my mother. Being un-

able to judge correctly, you have failed to comprehend my nature. You do not take into consideration why did you marry me in youth? My love and devotion now seem to be quite ineffectual."

With these words Janaki broke into tears and then addressing Lakshman, sad and brooding, said, "Lakshman! Just prepare a funeral pyre for me. This is my only remedy in the present trouble. I do not want to live after these false accusations. My husband is not pleased with me, he has renounced me before everybody. I shall now give myself up to the flame."

Then, Lakshman with a suppressed rage, looked at Ram and having divined the latter's motives from his look and gesture, prepared a funeral pyre for Sita.

At that time, none amongst the friends dared to talk to Ram, or to look at him; he then looked formidable like Death.

Ram was seated, fixing his gaze on earth. Sita wheeled round him and came near the fire, and after bowing to the gods and Brahma, she said addressing Agni, the god of fire, "If I am thoroughly devoted to Ram, then let fire protect me in every possible way. Ram takes a chaste woman for a false one, but if I be pure, let Agni protect me."

With these words, Janaki wheeled round the pyre and then fearlessly entered the flame. Everybody—the old and the young alike—witnessed in pain that Janaki was in fire. That gold Beauty fell into flame in the presence of all. The sages, gods and saints saw Janaki leaped into flame, like an oblation offered in sacrifice.

Women raised a piteous cry seeing her thus fallen into fire, like an angel dislodged from heaven on account of a curse. Both the Rakshasas and the Vanaras raised a hue and cry at that sight.

CHAPTER LXXX

THE ORDEAL

Then, virtuous Ram hearing different persons speaking different things brooded over in silent tears.

In the meantime, Yama with the Manes of the departed ancestors, Indra with the gods, Kuvera with the Yakshas, Varuna, the god of the sea, three-eyed Mahadeva riding a bull, and Brahma, the creator of all things and the foremost of those versed in the Vedas, appeared on the scene and said to Ram by raising their hands.

"Ram ! Thou art Lord of all and foremost of the wise. Why do you slight Janaki's entrance into flame ? You are Prajapati himself. Thou art the Lord of the universe and in the former cycle of creation, you were Vasu bearing the name of Krutadhana. There is no ruler above You. Thou art the eighth Mahadeva amongst the objects of adoration."

"The twin Aswinikumaras are your ears, and the sun and the moon eyes. You are present through the beginning, end and the middle. Then why do you forsake Sita so unjustly ?"

Hearing these words Ram said, "I am the son of king Dasaratha and consider myself a human being, now tell me what really I am ?"

Brahma replied, "Ram ! Just listen to me, I am narrating to you the true state of things."

"Thou art self-revealing Gadadhara holding conch-shell, disc and mace in hands ; Thou art one-tusked Boar.* Thou art Truth and deathless Brahma ; Thou art ever-existing. Thou art Virtue to the virtuous, Thy law is observed everywhere. Thou art fourhanded and

* One of the incarnations of Vishnu in which Vishnu raised up the submerged earth by his task.

hold Sanga bow like Death itself. There is no limit to thy powers. Thou art intellect, forgiveness and patience. Thou art creation and destruction. Saints assign you to be the refuge of all creatures. Thou art the Vedas with their thousand branches. Thou art Sacrifice, Vashatkar, Omkar, there is none above you. You are omnipresent and omniscient, You have thousand feet, thousand eyes and hundreds of heads. You hold the universe in you. Thou liest on the waters of the Universal Dissolution on the bed of the Ananta snake. O Ram ! I am your heart, goddess Sarswati is your tongue, spiritual gods are your hairs, night is the closing of your eyes, day is the opening of your eyes, the Vedas are your convictions ; there is nothing else besides you. The universe is your body, your forgiveness is earth, fire is your anger, and pleasure is the moon. You have bound down Vali and made Indra the King of heaven. Janaki is Lakshmi personified and Thou art Vishnu himself. You have assumed this human form for the destruction of Ravan. Ravan has been destroyed, now come back to the sphere of the gods. Unlimited are thy glory and prowess, and your devotees get everything that is desirable in this life and in the next."

After Brahma had finished, Agni appeared carrying Janaki on his lap. Janaki looked like the glittering morn, she was adorned in red, her dark curls were streaming behind. Fire could not scorch her garlands, ornaments or dress.

God Agni, the witness of every thing, handing over Janaki to Ram said, "Ram ! This is your Janaki. She is stainless. She has not committed any sin by word, action, or thought. Since her forcible abduction by Ravan, She passed her days alone in silent sorrows for your separation. So long she was confined in a harem, so long she was under another's power, but mind was ever fixed upon you. You are her only prop. Grim Rakshasis frightened her in various ways, oppressed her in different manner, but in her heart there was not even the slightest thought of Ravan. Her heart is pure and she is abso-

lutely sinless. Accept her now. I ask you to do so. Don't suspect her even for a moment."

Then, virtuous Ram, hearing these words of worshipful Agni, was exceedingly pleased and after thinking for a moment said with a cheerful look, "O God! Janaki's purification was necessary. She was long confined in Ravan's harem. Had I accepted her without her purification, then people would have accused me, saying that the son of King Dasaratha is foolish and lustful. However, I do now find that Janaki's heart is pure and full of devotion, and there could not be any stain on her character. She is protected by her own chastity. As the shore cannot be overstepped by the sea, so she could not be overcome by Ravan. That any villain could not insult her even in his thoughts. She was untouchable to him like pure flame of fire. As light is inseparable from the sun, so she is inseparable from me. Now, I cannot renounce her on account of her residing in a stranger's house. She is the purest in the three worlds. O gods! You are adorable beings, and you speak just for my good. Now, I shall protect her for ever."

With these words, heroic Ram received Janaki with delight, and everybody praised him for that.

CHAPTER LXXXI

THE HAPPY END.

Mahadeva then told Ram in well meaning words, "O lotus-eyed hero ! It is really fortunate that you have accepted Janaki. It is a great relief that you have removed Ravan's terror from the three worlds. Now, go back to Ayodhya, console sorrowful Bharat, and after seeing worshipful Kausalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra, take up the reins of the government to the delight of your friends. Then, after the birth of sons, perform Aswamedha sacrifice and then come back to heaven, after distributing wealth to the Brahmins. Ram ! Just see, your father, Dasaratha has come in a chariot on earth. He has reached the realm of Indra being redeemed from his pledge by your virtue, just bow down to him."

Thereupon, Ram and Lakshman bowed to their father seated in a chariot high up in the air, they saw him clad in a heavenly raiment and was glowing with his own effulgence.

King Dasarath too was greatly delighted at the sight of his dear sons, and taking Ram on his lap, and after embracing him closely, said, "My boy ! I tell you the truth, that for you I am enjoying felicity and bliss in the company of the gods. What Kaikeyi had told me in connection with your exile sank deep into my heart But to tell you the truth, finding you safe and sound with Lakshman, I have become free from all sorrows, like the sun freed from the mist. My boy ! As Astavakra saved virtuous Brahman Kohala, likewise I have been saved by a good son like you. This day, I gather from the words of the gods that you are Vishnu incarnate and has been born as my son for the destruction of Ravan. Kausalya's desire will now be fulfilled, she will see you happily returned from the exile. The citizens are highly fortunate for they will see you installed on the throne. My boy ! I want to see you now united with pure-cha-

ractered Bharat. You have fulfilled your vow and have delighted the gods by slaying Ravan. You have acquired fame by your great achievements. May you enjoy a long life and rule over the kingdom with thy brothers!"

Then, Ram said with joined hands, "Father! Be gracious to Kaikeyi and Bharat. You cursed Kaikeyi saying, I do renounce you with your son, Forgive her now." King Dasarath agreed to Ram's words and embracing Lakshman said, "My boy! If Ram be pleased with you, you will attain fame and pious merits and heaven at the end. Now attend upon him. Ram is ever engaged in doing good to the world, and all sing his praise. Worship him who is the heart of the gods, and even a mystery to them. You should know that Ram is Eternal Brahma."

Then addressing his daughter-in-law, Janaki, Dasarath said, "My daughter! Don't be angry with Ram because he discarded you at first. He is your well-wisher, he did so, simply for your purification. It is indeed difficult to retain such purity of character as yours, and your fame will cast all other women into shade. I know, you don't require any direction for your devotion towards your husband, still I must say that Ram is your highest god."

Saying all these, king Dasarath of divine appearance repaired to the heavenly region. After the departure of Dasarath, Indra, the king of the gods said to Ram, "Your sight of us all won't be in vain. We have been greatly pleased with you, now ask for any thing you like."

Ram then cheerfully said, "O king of the gods! If you are really pleased with me, grant me what I ask of you. Let the Vanras that have lost their lives for me be revived. I want to see them cheerful again, please restore those heroes to life who despised death for my sake. Let the Golangulas and Bhullukas be again quite hale and hearty, and let them be happy with their wives and children. This is my prayer to you. I do further pray that the places where they live, should

abound in fruits and flowers through all seasons of the year, and all the streams will run crystal clear."

Thereupon, Indra said, "This is indeed asking too much, but I shall never retract my word, so this will be done. The Vanaras, and Bhallukas lie scattered with severed limbs and heads on the field of battle, slain by the Rakshasas, will rise into life with sound bodies, as people rise from sleep. They will again be united with their friends and relatives. And their places of residence will abound in fruits, flowers and will be watered by brimming rivers."

As soon as Indra uttered this blessing, the dead Vanaras stood up with unhurt bodies, as if from sleep, and everyone was astonished at that spectacle.

Indra and other gods seeing Ram delighted for gaining his object praised him along with Lakshman and said, "O king! Now allow the Vanaras to depart. console worshipful Janaki, solely devoted to go and meet your brothers Bharat and Satrugna, observing penance in your sorrow and console your afflicted mother and sit upon the throne of your kingdom."

With these words Indra and other gods disappeared in the sky in their brilliant cars.

Night then set in, and Ram ordered everybody to take rest, and the Vanara army under the protection of Ram and Lakshman looked like a starry night illumined by the rays of the moon.

CHAPTER LXXXII

STARTS FOR AYODHYA

The night was over, and Ram got up from sleep in an exceedingly happy frame of mind. In the meantime, Vibhishan approached Ram and respectfully said, "There Gazel-eyed women skilled in the art of toilet have arrived with scented oil, paints, apparel, ornaments, garlands and sandal paste. They will look to your bath."

Ram said, "O Rakshasa king! Invite Sugriva and other Vanaras to bath. My brother Bharat who has been reared up in luxury with care, is now observing austere vow for my sake, without him bath and toilet won't be pleasant to me, now see that we may start without delay, for journey to Ayodhya is long and arduous."

Vibhishan thereupon replied, "O prince! I shall reach you Ayodhya within a day, My brother Kuvera had a wonderful chariot named Puspaka. Ravan occupied that by defeating Kuvera. That chariot now belongs to you. Look, there stands that great chariot like a band of clouds; this will carry you to Ayodhya. Ram! If you wish to do me favour, if you are pleased with me, if you bear any love and friendship towards me then you will be pleased to spend one day in Lanka with Lakshman and your wife Janaki. I have made due arrangements for it, you kindly accept them with your friends and followers. I am your obedient servant, but you have honoured me with your friendship, that is why I have ventured to make that request, but never think that I command you in any way."

Thereupon, Ram replied, "O friend! you have shown me sufficient honour by helping me with your counsels, friendship and by your active services in the war; so do not think that I cannot concede to your request, but my heart has grown restless for meeting my brother Bharat, who came even up to the Chitra-

kuta to persuade me back to Ayodhya. I have become equally anxious to see my mother, Sumitra and worshipful Kaikeyi and other friends and relations in the city. Now, permit to me start. My friend, bring me chariot soon. I have achieved success, it is not proper to tarry any further.

Thereupon, Vibhishan fetched the chariot without any delay. That chariot was wrought in gold and sapphire. A yellow flag was streaming from its top. In that chariot there was golden cabin decorated with golden lotuses. This had been constructed by the heavenly architect, Viswakarma. Ram and Lakshman were greatly astonished at the sight of the wonderful car.

Then Vibhishan humbly said, "O king! Now tell me what else I shall do for you?"

After thinking for a short time Ram said, "O Rakshasa king! The Vanaras have suffered a good deal, you just entertain them with food and drink. I have conquered Lanka with the help of those heroes, they were quite fearless of death, now they have won success. Prove your thankfulness by offering valuable presents to them. They will return home being honoured and entertained by you. You see, if you be kind, charitable and self-possessed then, all will be obedient to you, this is why I make this request to you. That king who does not know how to gratify his subjects, and for nothing incur heavy losses of life in war, soldiers leave him in fear." Thereupon, Vibhishan gave sufficient jewels and other valuables to the vanaras.

When every thing was ready, Ram took up bashful Sita on his lap and got upon the excellent chariot with Lakshman. Then after greeting heroic Sugriva, Vibhishan and other Vanaras with due honour, Ram said, "Vanaras! you have done what a friend should do. I now give you permission to go to your respective places. Sugriva! Thou hast done what an affectionate friend ought to do. Now start without any further delay, set out with your army to Kishkindhya. Vibhishan! I offer you the kingdom of Lanka, live there in happiness

peace, and henceforth you won't have anything to fear from even from Indra or other gods. I am now proceeding to my father's capital Ayodhya, therefore I offer you my greetings and my leave to depart."

When Ram said this, Sugriva and other Vanaras along with Vibhishan said with joined palms, "O king! We too shall go to Ayodhya, take us with you. We shall roam about in joy through the gardens and groves of Ayodhya. After witnessing there your coronation-ceremony and after greeting mother Kausalya, we shall repair to our respective places." Virtuous Ram hearing their words said, "It will surely be a great delight to me to enjoy the company of friends like you in the capital. Sugriva! Soon get upon the chariot with the Vanaras. Vibhishan! Just get upon the car with your counsellors,"

Thereupon, all boarded the chariot in delight. Then the chariot ascended the sky at Ram's order. The Vanaras, Bhallukas and Rakshasas sat there at ease, without congestion.

The Puspaka chariot rose into the sky with a deafening noise. Then, Ram looking round him, said to Janaki of moon-like face, "Look there! My darling, the city of Lanka resting on the Trikuta hill, which resembles the Kailash mountain. Look! there lies the field of battle muddy with blood and covered with dead bodies. Here both the Vanaras and the Rakshasas have lost their lives, There lies that proud warrior blessed with a boon. There I have slain Ravan for thee. There Kumbhakarna and Prahasa were killed. There heroic Hanuman slew Dhumraksha. There warlike Sushena worsted Vidyumali. There Angada killed Vikata. There heroic Virupaksha, Mahaparswa, Mahodara and Akampana were slain, by me. It was before the construction of the bridge. There stands the sacred shrine, it destroys all sins, and is holy. Now it is revered by all and is known as the pilgrimage of Setubandha. Here the Rakshasa chief Vibhishan joined with me. There appears Kishkindhya the beautiful city of Sugriva, adorned with fine forests. There I slew down heroic Vali."

Then, Janaki at the sight of Kishkindhya, spoke with bashful love, "O royal master! I wish to take with me

Tara and the dear consort of Sugriva, and other Vanara ladies with me. Ram agreed at Janaki's proposal and stopped the car even at Kishkindhya. He then turning to Sugriva said, "Sugriva! Ask the Vanaras to take their wives to accompany Sita to Ayodhya. You will be prompt to take those women. Let us all go there." Then Sugriva went inside the palace and said to Tara. "My darling! Ram asks you to take with you the wives of the Vanaras and to proceed to Ayodhya for Janaki's delight. We shall take them to have a sight of Ayodhya and of king Dasarath's wives."

There, beautiful Tara told the Vanara women that it was Sugriva's wish that they should proceed with their husbands to Ayodhya, "I shall also be glad," said she, "if you go to Ayodhya and see the queens of king Dasarath."

At this direction of Tara, the Vanara women dressed themselves and got upon the chariot to have a sight of Sita. When they got upon the car, it proceeded as before.

Then Ram pointing the Rishyamukha hill told Janaki. "There rises the Rishyamukha hill tinged with gold and other minerals, like the cloud illumined by lightning. Here, I met Sugriva and agreed to Vali's death. Look there stretches the Pampa lake covered with blooming lotuses and its banks are surrounded with beautiful trees. There I lamented and wept for your absence, and on its bank I met pious Ssvari. There I slew Kavantha. There the Vihanga chief Jatayu, fought against Ravan and died for you. Look there stands our beautiful cottage in the forest wherefrom the Rakshasa chief Ravan abducted you by force.

There runs the crystal-watered Godavari. There stands the hermitage of sage Agasia, surrounded by plantain trees. There stands the hermitage of Sharabhanga. Look there stands the hermitage of great Atri effulgent as the sun. There I slew huge Viradha. There you met the virtuous wife of Atri. There stands the Chitrakuta hill. There came noble Bharat to persuade me to go back to Ayodhya. There runs the Jamuna through beautiful woods. There stands the hermitage of the great sage, Bharadwaja. There flows the sacred Ganges. There stands the city of Srngavera, there lives my friend Guha. Look now there gleams

Ayodhya, the capital of my father's kingdom. Janaki ! you have now arrived at Ayodhya, show your respect to the city."

Then the Vanaras and Vibhishan and other Rakshasas began to survey Ayodhya with delight. The city was adorned with white, high palatial buildings, and its high palaces being always frequented by horses and elephants. The Vanaras and Rakshasas looked with admiration the city which was like a second Amaravati.

CHAPTER LXXXIII

MEETING WITH BHARADWAJ

After the completion of the fourteen years, on the fifth day of the moon arrived at the hermitage of Bharadwaj. After greeting the sage, Ram asked, "O worshipful master ! Has any man suffered from scarcity in the city of Ayodhya ? Does every body live there in happiness ? Does Bharat justly govern the people ?"

Bharadwaj cheerfully replied, "O Ram ! Your obedient Bharat has placed your sandals on the throne and after administering good to his own house and to others, is anxiously waiting for our return. When being deprived of the kingdom, you repaired to the forest with Janaki and Lakshman for fulfilling the pledge of your father, I was greatly pained at that sight, but now seeing your prosperity and happiness I have been greatly pleased. Ram ! I know all your joys and sorrows. I know what you had suffered during your residence at Janasthan. Ravan abducted Janaki when you were engaged in the protection of the saints and ascetics. I know

your adventures in the forest, also your friendship with Sugriva, destruction of Vali and other feats of heroism. I know of your meeting with the gods and of their benedictions on you. I have known all these by my Yogic powers. My pupils will carry your news to Ayodhya. Now, receive my blessing. Accept my hospitality and start to-morrow for Ayodhya."

Ram agreeing to Sage Bharadwaj's words, cheerfully said, "Let the trees that stand on the way to Ayodhya bring forth sweet fruits, and let their sweet flavour sweeten the air, even if there be not season for it."

Sage Bharadwaj granted Ram's prayer. Ayodhya was three Yojanas distant from the hermitage of Bharadwaj. The trees standing along the three Yojanas were bent down with the burden of fruits and looked like the Kalpa-trees. All the barren trees brought forth fruits, those that were devoid of flowers were covered with blooms, and those that were dry became adorned with green leaves. The Vanaras, to their great delight, began to enjoy the fruits and flowers, as the virtuous people enjoy the blessing of heaven. Then Ram thought of the arrangement that he should make for the satisfaction of Sugriva and others. Ram after deciding the course of action said to Hanuman, "O hero! Go immediately and learn whether every one is doing well in Ayodhya or not, convey my good wishes to Guha, residing at Sringavera. He is like me and is my friend. He will be happy if he hears that my troubles are over and I am quite hale and hearty. He will tell you every thing about Bharat and show you the path to Ayodhya. Then after going to Ayodhya, convey good news about myself, Janaki and Lakshman and tell him that I have attained my object of desire. Then tell him about the abduction of Sita by Ravan, my friendship with Sugriva, Vali's death, crossing the sea, search for Sita, setting out with army to the sea coast, sight of the sea, building of the bridge, death of Ravan, benedictions by Indra and Brahma, meeting with departed father Dasarath and the blessing of Sankara, and my return to Ayodhya. Tell all these in details to Bharat. Tell him further that Ram after the conquest of his enemies is coming back with Sugriva, Vibhishan

and his other mighty friends. Observe what expression his face assumes and read his mind, and mark his attitude after he hears these things about me. Gather from his gestures and posture and from his words the real state of mind. You see, whose mind is not changed by the prospect of a kingdom? If Bharat wishes for the throne for being accustomed to it then let him govern the world. O hero! Till you approach Ayodhya during this time go and ascertain Bharat's mind and his doings."

Being thus directed by Ram, Hanuman assumed the form of a human being and proceeded towards Ayodhya. As Garura goes first to catch the snakes, so he went fast towards Ayodhya. The hero then proceeded along the sky route of the birds and arrived at Srīngavera at the junction of the Ganges and the Jamūna, and after appearing before Guha, the Nishada king, said, "O king of the Nishadas, your friend, Ram, has conveyed you his good wishes along with that of Lakshman and Janaki. He will spend the night of the Panchami at the hermitage of Bharadwaj at the request of that sage and he will come to see you tomorrow."

Saying this to the Nishada chief Hanuman cheerfully proceeded to Ayodhya with great speed. On his way he saw the pilgrimage of Parashuram, Valukini, the Gomukhi, dense sal forest and broad high ways and crowd of people on them. Gradually he covered a long distance and arrived at the green outskirt of Nandigram. The gardens and trees of the place were as fine as that of the Chaitraratha garden of Kuvera. Many a woman was culling fruits and flowers from them. At last, Hanuman saw Bharat in a hermitage, about two miles distant from Ayodhya.

Bharat was leading an ascetic life on account of the pangs of separation with his brother, and subsisting on fruits and roots and putting on a bark garment. His locks were matted and his body was stained with dirt. That spirited prince, like an ascetic saint, was ruling over the world having placed Ram's sandals in front of him, and was protecting the four castes from various troubles. His counsellors, priests and generals were seated before him, clad in red clothes. In fact, the citizens had no inclination

for mirth, or amusement by leaving aside that virtuous prince, and Bharat was like piety incarnate.

Hanuman approached him, and said with joined palms, "O king! for whom you thus lead the life of penance that Ram enquires after your welfare. Banish your sorrows, I have good news for you. You will soon meet with Ram. He has slain Ravan, rescued Sita, thus having attained his object, he is coming back with his heroic allies and Lakshman. And as Sachi accompanies Indra, the King of Gods, so famous Sita is accompanying him."

At this news, Bharat fainted with joy. But he shortly regained his senses and embraced Hanuman in deep affection. He greeted Hanuman with tears of joy and said.

"My friend! Be thou a god or man, thou hast come out of kindness to me. What can I offer you for the joyous news you have given? Please accept one hundred thousand cows, hundred villages and sixteen girls. These girls are of golden hue, and are adorned with ornaments and they are of good conduct. Their noses and thighs are chrming and their faces are beautiful like the moon. They belong to good families of high born castes."

Bharat became greatly anxious to meet Ram?

CHAPTER LXXXIV

RECAPITULATION OF THE PAST

Bharat resumed, "This day, I shall hear again the sweet and affectionate words of that lord, long repaired to the forest. The popular adage that if man lives he may be happy even hundred years after, now appears to be true. Take your seat and tell me where and how Ram contracted friendship with the Vanaras?"

Then Hanuman took his seat and began to narrate the incidents of the forest-life of Ram.

'Of course, you know the boons that your mother asked on account of which Ram was exiled to the forest. When King Dasarath died in grief for his separation with Ram, envoys brought you from Rajgriha. But you were unwilling to accept the crown and you went to the Chitrakut hill to bring Ram back to Ayodhya. But when Ram refused to break his pledge, you returned with Ram's sandals with you. This much you yourself know, but now listen what took place afterwards."

"The Chitrakut hill was greatly disturbed on account of your visit, and Ram from thither entered the deep forest of Dandaka infested with lions, tigers and elephants. When he entered the Dandaka forest Viradha attacked him like an infuriated elephant, but Ram Chandra threw him down into a deep hole. That very day, Ram reached the hermitage of Rishi *Sharabhanga* in the evening. After *Sharabhanga's* death, Ram repaired to Janasthan. While he was residing there, fourteen thousand Rakshasas, the inhabitants of Janasthan fought against him, but he routed them within the fourth part of a day, and along with them he slew Khara, Dushana and Trishira. In that Janasthan, Ravana's sister, came to Ram, but Lakshman cut down her nose and ears at Ram's words. Surpanakha then approached Ravan in her agonies. After that, Ravan's attendant Marich deluded Janaki by assuming the form of a golden deer. Janaki at the sight of that

antelope, asked Ram to catch it, saying that it would enhance the beauty of the forest-asylum. Ram ran after the deer with bow and arrows in his hands and killed the same with a single shaft. When Ram was out a-hunting, Lakshman followed to find him out. In their absence, Ravan came in the asylum and carried away Janaki by force. Yatayu, the king of the birds, resisted Ravan for the rescue of Janaki, but Ravan slew him down. At that time, some great Vanaras were seated on hill top and they saw in surprise that Ravan was flying away with Sita in his swift Vimana. Ravan soon reached Lanka, kept Janaki in his palace and tried to comfort her by various means. But Sita despised all the wealth and allurements of Lanka."

"In the meantime, Ram came back to his cottage after bagging the deer, he but greatly pained at the sight of Jatayu, a friend of his sire. Then, Ram roamed through the forest and the banks of Godavari in search of Sita. Ram met Kavandha in his way and at his word Ram met Sugriva on the Rishyamukha mountain. Even at the sight there grew a mutual attachment between Sugriva and Ram before any words were exchanged, and their attachment grew more and more deep by intimacy. Sugriva was driven off by his brother from his kingdom. Ram killed that mighty warrior Vali and bestowed the kingdom on Sugriva. After that ten millions of Vanaras set out in search of Janaki at Sugriva's command.

We were long detained in the Vindhya range as we could not find our way. In that mountain Jatayu's brother Sampati lived. He gave us the information that Sita was living in Ravan's house. Then I crossed the sea and found Sita in the Asoka forest. I gave her signet ring of Ram with the name of Ram inscribed on it and I came back with the ornament of her head. Ram revived (as dying person revived by taking nectar) at the sight of that and by the news of Janaki. He then encouraged the army for the destruction of Lanka. Nala built a bridge over the sea at the command of Ram. The Vanara army crossed the sea by that bridge. Then a very fierce fight ensued. Nala killed Prahasta, Lakshman

killed Indrajit and Ram killed Kumbhakarna and Ravan. Then Ram had meeting with Indra, Varuna, Siva, Brahma and king Dasarath. Gods and saints blessed Ram in joy. Then Ram came to Kishkindhya on the Puspaka chariot. He is now stopping at the hermitage of sage Bharadwaj. Tomorrow the *Pushya star* will be in *ascendance* and will see him to-morrow."

Bharat was extremely delighted by Hanuman's words and remarked with joined hands, "At last, after such a long time my desire is going to be fulfilled."*

CHAPTER LXXXV

THE RECEPTION.

Bharat hearing this welcome news from Hanuman, addressing Satrugna said, "Let all now worship with music and flowers the gods and the sacred Chaityas of the city. Let bards, chanters of praise, musicians and women of the town† go forward to meet Ram. Let the

* The Epic inspite of its high martial strain strikes a deep note of domestic virtues. The home-life of Ram and others appear to be more charming than the rest. The bond of affection and love that bind the brothers still remains the highest ideal of all times. Bharat is a wonderful image of selfless love.

† Auxiliary force!

royal mothers, counsellors, the salaried army, regular soldiers, and the forest army† and different classes of people—Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and chief of the clans stir out to see the moon-like face of Ram.

Then Shatrughna after dividing a large number of servants into various batches asked them to level the uneven ground from Nandigram to Ayodhya, to water the streets and public roads with cold water, to scatter flowers and fried paddies everywhere, to hoist flags from every place, to decorate the houses and streets with garlands, flowers and *patri-coloured* things arranged in an ornamental style, and to have all these things complete before the next sun-rise.

On the following day, at the command of Shatrughna Drishti, Janata, Bejoy, Sidhartha, Arthasadhaka, Asoka, Mantrapal and Sumantra were out. Many warriors riding well-decorated elephants, or horses with golden reins, or on chariots, paraded the streets. Then queen Kausalya with other co-wives set out in car with Sumitra at their head. Pious Bharat proceeded with his ministers, priests, chiefs of the clans, and merchants, accompanied by persons carrying garlands and sweets. Bharat was beside himself with joy at Ram's return, and the bards were chanting the glory of Ram and Satrughna himself blew a trumpet.

Bharat was clad with a humble piece of linen and the skin of black buck. He carried Ram's sandals on his head, held a white umbrella adorned with wreathes of white flowers, and a royal crown worked with gems and the streets were resounded with the rattling of the cars, with the neighs of the horses and trumpet-sounds of the elephants, as well as with the sounds of conch-shells and loud trumpets. It seemed as if the whole of Nandigram followed Bharat at the moment.

Bharat then, turning his eyes to Hanuman said, "Have you spoken anything false out of fickleness incidental to the Vanara race? I do not find worshipful Ram, or any of the Vanaras."

Hanuman replied, "Sage Bharadwaj had treated Ram

with great hospitality with various things. It is due to his benediction that trees along the route to Ayodhya have borne sweet blossoms and fruits and are resonant with the humming of the bees. Hark, there rises the clamour of the Vanaras. Perhaps, he has crossed the Gomati by this time. Look, a cloud of dusts has been raised behind the rows of the Sala trees, perhaps the Vanaras have entered that forest. Look, there the beautiful Vimana, like the moon. This has been constructed by Viswakarma. Noble Ram has obtained it by destroying Ravan and his brood. Kuvera got that Vimana by the blessing of Brahma. It is bright as the morning sun. Ram, Lakshman, Janaki, Sugriva and Vibhishan are coming in that car."

At that moment, a cry rose from all the people collected there, "There is Ram! There is Ram"! The joyous shouts rent the sky. Every body then lighted from his car, or from his mount, and looked to Ram seated in the Vimana, as people look to the moon shining in the sky.

Bharat welcomed him in joy, by joining his hands in respect and worshipped him by presenting offerings to his feet. Large-eyed Ram on the Vimana looked like Indra wielding the thunder-bolt. He was glowing like the morning sun on the summit of the Sumeru mountain. Bharat prostrated himself on the ground before him. Then at the command of Ram the Vimana descended on the earth. Bharat again greeted him in joy. It is after a long time that the two brothers met and Ram embraced Bharat in joy. Then Bharat greeted Lakshman who bowed to him and welcomed Sita in delight. He then embraced Sugriva, Janyuban, Angada, Dvivida, Neela, Rishabha, Sushena, Nala, Gavaksha, Gandhamadau, Sharabha and Panasa in due succession. The Vanaras looking like human beings also enquired about Bharat's welfare. Prince Bharat after embracing Sugriva said, "O hero! We were four brothers, but now we are five and you are one of them. Friendship is born of love, and enmity of injury. You are our dearest friend."

* Prostitutes were regarded as auspicious in ceremony.

Then after embracing Vibhishan, Bharat said, "It was due to good luck that worshipful Ram found a friend in you, through whose help he succeeded in achieving an arduous feat."

In the meantime, Satrugna bowed down to Ram, Lakshman and Janaki's feet.

Ram then approached mother Kausalya, lean with sorrow and then to Kaikeye and Sumitra and then to the priest. The citizens respectfully enquired about Ram's welfare, at that time their joined palms looked like so many lotusbuds. In the mean time, Bharat put the sandals on Ram's feet and said, "O worshipful one! The kingdom which you placed as a trust with me, I do herewith make over to you. This day, my life has been blessed and my desire has been fulfilled, seeing you again back in Ayodhya. Now, inspect the treasury and other places of the palace, and the army, For your virtue prosperity has increased tenfold"

Hearing these affectionate words of Bharat, the Vanaras and Vibhishan shed tears. Then Ram taking Bharat on his lap reached the latter's place by the Vimana. After getting down from the Vimana, Ram said, "O Vimana! I direct you to go back to Kuvera to carry him as before."

Being thus directed by Ram, the Vimana proceeded towards Alaka to the north. And then as Indra worships the feet of Vrihaspati, so Ram worshipped the feet of his friend and priest Vasistha and took a separate seat along with him.

CHAPTER LXXXVI

RAM'S CORONATION.

Then, Bharat placing his hands over his head, as a mark of respect, said, "Arya! You have honoured my mother by going into exile and by offering the kingdom to me. Let me return the kingdom which you have conferred on me. The burden which only a bull can bear is too much for a calf. As it is difficult to stop a torrent by a dam, so it was difficult for me to protect all the weak points in the administration of the kingdom. I could not follow your foot-steps as an ass can not imitate the pace of a horse, nor a crow the gait of a swan. If one plants a tree in a garden, and if the tree dies in blossoms before it bears fruits then all his troubles become vain. You are our lord, and if you do not rule over us, then this simile will apply to you. Let the people witness you this day installed on the throne like the meridian sun. May you retire to sleep with sweet music and rise from bed with trumpet notes. Let your empire extend up to the farthest limit of the earth where the sun and the moon shine."*

Ram then agreed to Bharat's proposal and sat upon an excellent seat.

Then, at Shatrughna's directions, expert barbers adept in cutting hair and beard, with their pleasing touch surrounded Ram. Bharat, Lakshman, Sugriva and Vibhishan first took their bath. After that, Ram got his matted locks cut, and after bath he put on a rich apparel and excellent garlands and thereby looked exceedingly beautiful. Satrughna with his own hands dressed Ram and Lakshman. The queens of King Dasarath adorned Sita with ornaments, and Kaushalya adorned the Vanara women with great affection and care.

In the meantime, charioteer Sumantra, at Satrughna's words, brought an excellent chariot. Sugriva and Hanu-

*Where the sun never sets?

man after their bath put on excellent garments and earrings and followed Ram, like Indra the king of Gods. Wives of Sugriva and Sita set out in fine cloths to visit the city of Ayodhya.

Asoka, Bijoy and Sidhwartha and other ministers with priest Vasistha, began to consult for enhancing the splendour of the city since Ram Chandra had come back. They asked the servants to make all preparations for the coronation of Ram. Having given their orders to the servants, they went to meet Ram.

Then Ram set out in a chariot like Indra for an inspection of the town. Bharat held the reins of the horse and Satrughna held umbrella over the head of Ram. Lakshman began to fan with a palm-leaf fan and Vibhishan stood by his side with a moon-white chowri. Saints and gods began to sing praises to Ram.

Sugriva rode a huge elephant named Satrunjaya. The Vanaras in human forms got over the elephants; having decorated their bodies in various ornaments. Ram being surrounded by his kinsmen and friends proceeded towards Ayodhya, a city of palaces, Conchshells and trumpets were sounded at that time. The citizens saw Ram coming with his retinue to Ayodhya. They greeted him and prayed for his victory. Ram too greeted the citizens according to their ranks. They followed Ram accompanied by his brothers. Ram being surrounded by his ministers, Brahmins and subjects looked like the moon among the stars. The musicians proceeded in front of Ram with their music. As marks of auspiciousness money proceeded with cows, sweets tinged with turmeric and a large number of maids and Brahmins headed the procession. During the journey, Ram talked about Sugriva's friendship, Hanuman's prowess and the valour of other Vanaras. The citizens of Ayodhya were greatly astonished at the tales of the prowess of the Rakshasas. Ram, thus talking about those things, entered his beautiful paternal palace inhabited by his former ancestors.

Then, Ram gently said to Bharat, "Take Sugriva and other friends to the palace to greet mothers Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi, and assign my sapphire place to Sugriva for this stay."

Thereupon, Bharat entered that place. Then the servants at the orders of Satrugna entered the mansion with oil lamps and bed-covers. Then Satrugna said to Sugriva, "My Lord! Please send an envoy for the coronation of worshipful Ram. It is now necessary to collect water from the four oceans."

Then, Sugriva handing over the jewelled pitchers to Hanuman, Jamvuvan and other two heroes, said, See us in the morning with water from the four seas in these pitchers."

The vanaras at once set out like great birds along the sky. Hanuman, Jamvuvan, Vegadarshi and Rishabha soon fetched water from the four seas. Water from five hundred rivers was collected. Heroic Sushena brought water from the Eastern sea, and Rishabha from the Southern sea. Gavaya brought water from the Western sea scented with red sandal and camphor. Anil brought water from the northern sea.

Then Satrugna seeing the water thus collected said to the ministers and priest Vasishtha, "Now be ready to begin the investiture-ceremony."

Vasishtha and other Brahmins, thereupon, made Ram and Janaki to sit upon jewelled seats. Then Vasishtha, Bejoy, Javali, Kashyapa, Katyana, Gautama and Vamdeve bathed Ram with sweet scented crystal water, as the Vasus bathed Indra in the days of yore. Then, the Ritwikas, Brahmins, sixteen virgins, ministers, warrior and merchants anointed Ram with various liquids. The gods stationing themselves in the sky began to participate in the investiture ceremony. Vasishtha made Ram to sit upon a golden throne wrought with jewels, in the midst of the assembly, and then he put on Ram's head a glittering crown with which Manu, and after him, other kings were crowned in successive generations. The Ritwikas adorned Ram's body with various ornaments. Satrugna held a white umbrella over Ram's head, and Sugriva and Vibhishan stood on his two sides with two white chowris. The wind-god at the direction of Indra presented Ram a wreath of hundred golden lotuses and a necklace of variegated gems. The gods and the Gandharvas began to sing,

while the Kinnaras commenced their dance in joy. The earth grew rich with crops and the trees became laden with fruits. Ram gave to the Brhm̐ins millions of cows and rich apparel and precious ornaments in profusion.

Then Ram offered Sugriva a jewelled necklace bright as the rays of the sun, two armour-plates white as the moon and wrought with lapislazuli to Angada, and to Janaki a pearl-necklace, fine clothes and excellent ornaments.

Janaki took out that jewelled necklace and was desirous to offer to Hanuman thinking of his past services. At that, Ram divining her intention said, "Janaki! Give this to whom you like."

Then Janaki offered that necklace to Hanuman, in whom spirit, patience, fame, sincerity, prowess, modesty, morality, valour, might, intelligence and other noble virtues' existed.

Hanumn, with that necklace, shone like a hill surrounded by white fleecy clouds.

Then, other Vanaras received presents according to their respective ranks. Ram gratified Sugriva, Vibhishan, Hanuman, Jamvuvan and other chiefs with sufficient wealth and victuals. Then he gave fine jewels to Dvidida, Mainda and Neela. Then all departed to their respective places by taking leave of Ram. Sugriva went to Kish-kindhya and Vibbishan with his four counsellors to Lanka.

Then, liberal hearted Ram said to Lakshman, "My boy! Share with me the kingdom with fourfold armies, that has been ruled by our ancestors, and as they acted formerly as heirs-apparent to the throne so do thou take the responsibility of the administration."

But Lakshman did not agree to all these persuasions and entreaties of Ram. Then Ram appointed Bharat as heir-apparent to the throne. Afterwards, Ram performed Aswamedha and Paundhrika sacrifices various times. Ram ruled for ten thousand years and performed Aswamedha sacrifices ten times. His arms were long reaching up

to the knees and his chest was ample and large. Ram reigned in happiness with Lakshman and performed various kinds of sacrifices with his sons, brothers and relations.

During his reign no woman became a widow. There was no fear of ferocious animals, and diseases were unheard of. The whole principality was free from robbers and thieves. Nobody suffered in any way during his rule and the aged had not to perform funeral rites of the young. At that time, every body was happy and virtuous. Nobody attempted to do any violence to anybody out of their respect and love for Ram. People lived up to one thousand years and had number of children. Everyone was healthy and free from disease, and trees always brought forth fruits and flowers. God Parjanya rained sufficient rains and the wind blew sweet. Everyone was pleased with his own trade and followed his own vocation. None spoke falsehood and everybody had an auspicious look. This ancient epic was originally composed by sage Valmiki. It is founded on the Vedas. It gives righteousness, fame, longevity and victory to the kings. He who always listens to this epic becomes absolved from sins. He who desires for a son, or for wealth will get that if he listens to the account of the coronation of Ram, and the king will conquer his enemies. As Kausalya by Ram, and Sumitra by Lakshman became famous as fortunate mothers blessed with deathless sons, so women will be famous if they listen to the epic. He who listens to this great epic of Valmiki with due respect meets with no obstacle in life. He lives happily with his near and dear ones and gets his desired boons from Ram. Even the gods are pleased to learn that somebody is listening to the Ramayan. Even the mischievous servants refrain from doing any mischief to their masters. Those who lived far off from their native homes also lived in happiness and peace, and women after their menstrual courses bore good sons.

If any body reads (1) or adores this old history, he

(1) The word "read" (Patha) is significant, it proves that the Ramayana was reduced to writing by this time, perhaps in the 2nd century B. C. The passages containing Buddhist references and the Yavana are later interpola-

or she will be absolved from all sins and will enjoy longevity. Kshatriyas should hear the tale from the mouth of the Brahmins and they will get wealth and sons. Ram is Eternal Vishnu, Adideva (first God) Hari and Naryana. (2) If one reads or hears the whole (3) of the Ramayana. He will be pleased. This History is so very efficacious.

tions, the inner kernal of the Ramayan was composed perhaps before 500 B. C.

(2) All the terms are names of Vishnu—who envelops the world; Hari—who takes away everything; Narayana—who lies on water.

(3) Mark the word "whole" this proves that the Ramayana is complete here i. e. the epic ends with the Yudhyakanda, and the Uttarakanda is a subsequent addition by some other poet or poets. Indeed, the Uttarakanda has not only been composed with a different spirit, but, strictly speaking, it does hardly fit in with the preceding cantoes of the epic. The epic, both from poetic necessity and from the concluding remarks, clearly shows that the story ends with Yudhyakanda, there is no logical, poetical or moral necessity for dragging the epic beyond this legitimate conclusion. The Uttarakanda was composed in a time when Hinduism encountered the menace of Buddhism, and as a counter effect of that, it has emphasised Brahminism and the caste system, both of which Buddhism vehemently attacked, and there came a time when caste distinction became almost obsolete in Northern India. But as already pointed out in our Introduction, we shall give a brief account of all the important incidents of that Kanda, it seems to me, though I am not in a position to demonstrate, that the whole of the Ayodhyakanda and portions of the Balakanda and of the Aranyakanda have been composed by one man of supreme poetic genius, perhaps Valmiki, while the rest of the epic seems to have come from different hands.

The first part of the Ramayan specially the whole of the Ayodhya Kanda—is quite natural, poetic and full of human interests. The second part that begins with the Aranya Kanda ends with the Yudhya Kanda and the later interlude, the Uttara Kanda, is full of miracles, absurd

Now let good betide you and be glory unto the Lord. Gods and ancestors become pleased if one takes or listens to the Ramayan. Those who will respectfully reduce this Ramsambhita composed by the Rishi, to writing will attain Brahmaloaka. If one listens to it his progeny and wealth increase, he will get a good wife, attain happiness and all his endeavours will be successful. By the grace of this Ramayan, one's longevity, health, cure from disease, fame, intelligence, prowess are enhanced, and he will gain good friends, therefore, all virtuous people who are desirous of winning prosperity should listen to the epic with due attention and form.

The end of the Yydhya Kandam.

fantasies, mysterious and supernatural elements.

The Ramayan according to many scholars is only an allegorical poem representing the progress of the Aryan conquests and culture in the Dekkan. But the Ramayan seems to me to have been based upon some historical incidents which powerfully and deeply affected the Aryan minds. But we have lost all clue to them. Although Ram's expedition did not produce any visible effect on the Dekkan or on Ceylone, yet it does not appear to be an absolute myth. Exile of Ram, abduction of Sita, Death of Vali, destruction of Lanka appear to have a ring of incontrovertable truth about them. Prof Jacobi holds a new view of the epic. He says that the Ramayan is based upon the Vedic story of Indra and Vritra. Ram is Indra, Vritra is Ravan. Hanuman, the son of Paban (wind-god) is an obedient devotee of Ram, the winds were the friends of Indra in the Rigveda. Sarama, the dawn or god of the Rigveda, appears as a Rakshasi consoling Sita, the farrow or the goddess of the ploughfield. Indra slays Vritra with his thunderbolt and makes the clouds to pour their rains that will enable the ploughed land to bring forth crops in abundance. I have quoted different views, it is for the reader to accept which appears to be reasonable. In the Uttara Kanda, we come to a new poem altogether tagged to an old, immortal epic, and it will be more and more clear to our readers as we proceed with the poem. In our translation we shall observe the same rules which we have hitherto followed. Translator.

THE UTTARA KANDAM

CHAPTER I.

AGASTYA'S REVOCATIONS

Once upon a time, after Ram had assumed the reins of the kingdom after the destruction of the Rakhasas, several Munis came to greet him. Mhharshi Kaushika, Yavakrita, Garga, Galabha and Medhatiti's son, Kanwa, came from the east; sage Swastyatreya, Namuchi, Praw-nchi, Agastya, Atri, Sumukha and Vimukha came from the south; Nirshadgu, Kavashi, Dhanmya, Kauusheya came with their disciples from the west; Vashistha, Kashyapa, Viswamitra, Gautama, Jamadagni, Bharadwaja and the Saptarshis (seven rishis) came, from the north. These great sages, versed in the Vedas and the Vedangas, each one effulgent like fire, stood at the gate, and the great Rishi Agastya told the sentry, "Go and tell Ram that we, Rishis, have come to see Ram."

The gentle sentry, well familiar with all the etiquettes and customs of the court, soon went to Ram and said, "O king! sage Agastya with other Rishis have come."

Ram instantly said "Go and conduct them, here."

Then, the Rishis, bright as the morning sun, entered the royal hall. As soon as Ram saw them he stood up with joined hands in respect. He adored them by offering water to wash their feet and courteously asked them to take their seats on deer skins and Kusha grass. When the Rishis took their seats according to their respective ranks, Ram enquired about their welfare. The Maharshis in a body replied, "We are quite well since we find you well and free from all enemies. It is good luck indeed that you have slain dreadful Ravan with his sons and grand sons. It is, of course, quite insignificant, for if you take up your bow, you can conquer the three worlds, still we consider it to be our good luck that you have slain Ravan. We see

you this day victorious and united with Janaki, and happy with Lakshman and your mothers. It is our good fortune, that Prahasta, Vikata, Virupaksha, Mahodara, Vikampana, huge Kumbhakarna, Atikaya, Devantaka and Narantaka have been slain. Destruction of Ravan seems to be insignificant in comparison with your duel with Indrajit and his death at your hand.* It is your great fortune, that you have come out victorious from the arrows of that warrior who went about invisible like the tide of time. We have come to greet you at the news of that warrior's death. He was full of dark magic and was invisible to all. We have been greatly astonished at the news of his death. You have achieved victory and have saved us from all fear."

Ram was greatly surprised at these words of the Rishis, and respectfully asked, "Why do you praise Indrajit leaving aside Kumbhakarna and Ravan? Why do you consider him greater than Ravan? Of course, I cannot command you, but if you have no objection, please tell me how Indrajit got his boon and how he conquered Indra. How the son was mightier than the father?"†

Sage Agastya said, "Ram! It is desirable to narrate first the birth of Ravan and his boon and then I shall relate why Indrajit was invincible. In the golden age, there was a Brahmarshi named Pulastya. He was the son of Brahma, the creator of the universe of beings. In virtue, he was like Brahma himself. That sage used to live in the hermitage of Trinavindu by the side of the Sumeru mountain. During his stay, the daughters of the Rishis, Nagas and the nymphs used to sport about his hermitage.

The climate of that place was always pleasant, therefore they always visited the hermitage, some of them spent their time in singing, some in playing on Vinas, and some

* It was Lakshman who slew Indrajit. Look, what a confusion begins from the very outset.

† Obviously and evidently it is an useless interlude introduced for the love of miracles. They have, therefore, summarised the whole thing, but not omitted any incident described in the Uttara Kanda.

in dancing. That was a great interruption to his meditations. Pulastya was greatly annoyed and said, "Whoever will come within my sight will be heavy with a child." From the fear of that curse, none of those girls appeared before him. But the daughter of the royal saint, Trinavindu, did not know anything about it. One day, she was strolling about the hermitage, but none of her maids was present.

Pulastya was then reading* the Veda, the girl was listening to that reading, and suddenly all signs of pregnancy appeared in her and she grew pale. She was greatly frightened by those symptoms and thought what became of her. In her anxious thoughts, she entered the Asram of her father.

At her sight, her father asked, "Tell me, daughter, how you have come to look unlike a maid?" The girl piteously replied, "I can't say, father, why I have grown like this, I went to sage Pulastya's hermitage in quest of my maids. Having found none of them, I was listening to Pulastys's reading, when all on a sudden I noticed these mysterious changes in me, then in great fear I have hurried back."

Trinavindu, then, in Yoga found that it was the doing of Pulastya. He also came to know of the curse. He then took his daughter to Pulastya and said, "O worshipful sage! Please accept my daughter. She has come to you and begs you to accept her out of charity. She is an accomplished girl. When you will feel exhausted from observance of penance, then my daughter will nurse you."

Thereupon. Pulastya accepted Trinavindu's daughter. Thenceforth the girl lived with her husband. Pulastya was greatly pleased with her conduct and said, "I have been greatly pleased with your behaviour, so I wish to bless you with a son after me, he will be famous as Pulastya and since you conceived when you listened to my reading the Veda, he will be called Vishrava."

* Was he reading or reciting; was the Vedas then reduced to writing?

Shortly after this, that girl delivered a son named Vishrava. Vishrava was pious and became famous for his virtues, and became engaged in meditation like his father, Pulastya. Sage Bharadwaj hearing of his virtues married his daughter Devavarni to Vishrava. After some time, Devavarni delivered a son. Sage Pulastya was greatly delighted at the birth of Vishravas's son and he named the boy as Vaishnavan.

Vaishnavan grew like a flame of fire due to ascetic vows. He considered religion to be the highest thing in the world and he repaired to forest for meditation. Thus rolled on thousand years. Then Brahma and other Gods appeared before him and told him to ask for boon. Vaishnavan said, "Through your grace I want to be the Lord of wealth."

Brahma said, "your desire will be fulfilled. I have created Yama, Indra and Varuna, as three lords of created beings, and you will be the fourth, take this chariot glittering as the sun and be one of the gods. We are glad to grant your prayer." Then Brahma and other gods repaired to their region.

Vaishnavan then returned to his father and asked to find a place where he could live in happiness. Thereupon, Vishrava said, "on the shore of the Southern sea there is Trikuta hill and upon it, the divine architect, Vishwakarma, has built the beautiful city of Lanka for the residence of Rakshasas. It is beautiful like Amaravati, the heavenly city. The Rakshasas have left that city and entered into Patal, go and live in that Lanka. If you live there then there will be no harm to any body.

Thenceforth, the Lord of wealth began to live with the Rakshasas in Lanka, surrounded by the sea. During his reign, Lanka grew prosperous in no time. He used to visit his parents occasionally in his chariot, the Puspaka. Gods and the Gandharvas sang his glory and nymphs danced at his place."

Ram was greatly astonished at these words and enquired how the Rakshasas came to live in Lanka before Kuvera, the lord of wealth. Fixing his eyes on sage Agastya, Ram said, "we have heard that the Rakshasas are

born of Pulastya, but you have just now remarked that Lanka was in the possession of the Rakshasas even from before. It now appears from your words that the Rakshasas do not belong to that line of Pulastya. Were they more powerful than Ravan, Kumbhakarna, Indrajit and others? Who was their originator and what was his name? For what offence Visnu drove the Rakshasas from Lanka? Tell every thing in detail."

Agastya said, "Brahma first created water, then for its preservation, all beings were created afterwards,

When living beings were created, they asked Brahma "we have been oppressed by hunger and thirst, tell us what to do." Brahma said, "you preserve water." Then some of the beings said, "we shall preserve ('Rakshma') while some other said, we shall worship ('Yakshma')."

Then Brahma said, "Those who have said Rakshma, will be Rakshasas; and those who have said Yakshma, will be Yakshas."

Amongst those Yakshas and Rakshasas two brothers named Heti and Proheti, formidable as Madhu and Kaitabha, were born. Proheti was exceedingly religious and he retired to forest for meditation. While Heti married a dreadful girl named Bhaya, sister of Yama. A son was born to Heti named Vidutkesha. When Vidutkesha arrived at his youth. Heti asked Sandhaya's daughter for his son, The name of that girl was Salkatamkata. After some time, She was heavy with a child, and as Jahnavi cast off her burden, so she cast aside her burden in the Bandara hill, and joined her husband and became engaged in amorous dalliance."

In the mean time, that beautiful baby began to cry by thrusting his palm into his mouth. At that time, God Rudra was going along the sky with Parvati on a bull. The cries of the infant reached their ears. Rudra blessed the child with immortality and gave him years equal to that of his mother. Then Parvati said, 'from this day the Rakshasa women will deliver their children as soon as they will conceive, and their children as soon as born will attain the age of their mothers.' That cast off Raksha child was named Sukesha.

Viswavasu Somakantigramani had a beautiful daughter named Devavati, he married her to Sukesha. In course of time, Sukesha had three sons, Malyavan, Sumali and Mali. These three Rakshasas were noted for their prowess. After some time, they repaired to the Sumeru mountain to practise austerity and penance. They observed extreme austerities in their devotion. At last, Brahma with other gods appeared before them to grant them boons. Then those three brothers said, "My Lord! If you have been pleased with our penance then grant us this boon that we may be three invincible lords and remain attached to one another. Thereupon, Brahma granted their prayer."

These three brothers being thus invincible began to tyrannise over the Suras and the Asuras, and none found any protection from their oppression.

One day, those three brothers approached Viswakarma and asked him to build a magnificent palace for them either on the Himalayas or on the Sumeru.

Viswakarma said, "There is the Trikuta mountain on the shore of the southern sea, let me build the city of Lanka over that. Let the Rakshasas live there as the gods live in Amaravati."

The Rakshasas then came to live in Lanka.

The Rakshasas soon grew oppressive. The gods and the Rishis in fear approached the great God Trilochan and complained to him against the Rakshasas. Thereupon, God Rudra, advised them to go to Vishnu as it was not proper for him to destroy the Rakshasas with his own hand. Vishnu being approached by the gods, assured them saying that he would destroy the Rakshasas.

At that time, Malyavan, Sumali and Mali, these three brothers, were the head of the Rakshasas and many sons were born unto them. Malyavan informed his brothers, Mali and Sumali, of the manoeuvres of the gods. Thereupon, the three brothers decided to declare war against the gods.

Soon, a sanguinary war ensued between the gods and the Rakshasas. Lord Vishnu began to disperse the Rakshasas, as the clouds are scattered by the wind. Mali rallied the Rakshasas hosts and attacked Vishnu, but Vishnu

severed his head with his disc. At the death of Mali, Sumali and Malyavan retreated towards Lanka. But finding Vishnu slaying the Rakshasa soldiers, unwilling to fight. Malyavan wheeled back and challenged Vishnu with spirited words. Then Malyavan and Sumali were defeated by Vishnu. Being repeatedly vanquished by Vishnu, they left Lanka and came to live in the Patala region. Sumali, Malyavan and Mali were more formidable than Ravan, and none but Vishnu could have vanquished them. I shall now narrate to you the birth of Ravan and his progeny,

CHAPTER II

THE BIRTH OF RAVAN

After some time, Sumali left the Patal region and roamed over the earth. With him was his beautiful daughter. During his ramblings Sumali saw Kuvera, effulgent like fire, Sumali was frightened by his sight and re-entered the Patala region. He then thought of the means how he could improve his position. With this thought, addressing his Daughter, Kaikashi, he said, that she had attained her youth and was past marriageable age and asked her to ask Vishrava Muni for her husband and to marry the sage of her own accord,

Thereupon, Kaikashi went to the hermitage of Vishrava. At that time Vishrava was engaged in performing a sacrifice, consequently, Kaikashi waited in silence. Seeing her thus waiting, liberal hearted Vishrava enquired whence she had come and what was her object. Kaikashi then said that she had come according to the direction of her father.

Vishrava then replied, "I have divined your purpose. Since thou hast come at the time of a fearful sacrifice, you will bring forth dreadful sons." At this, Kaikashi said, "I donot ask for such vicious sons from such a virtuous person like you, be kind to me." Then Vishrava said. "My beautiful lady ! Your youngest boy will be after me."

In course of time, Kaikashi delivered a terrible Raksha. He had ten heads, twenty hands, his colour dark, like coll-yrum hue, wide mouth, thick lips and red hairs. As soon as that son was born Jackals began to howl, and several evil portents were seen. Vishrava named this boy as Dashagriva, because he had ten necks. After him, the formidable Kumbhakarna was born, then hideous Surpanakha was born and after her, pious Vibhishan was born.

One day, Kuvera came to see his father, Kaikashi then called her son Dashagriva to have a look at Kuvera and exhorted him to be like the latter. Dashagriva was filled with envy and swore to be more powerful than Kuvera. Then Dashagriva retired to sacred Gokarna and began to practise austere vows with his brothers. Brahma was pleased with their penance and blessed them with his boons.

Ram enquired about the nature of their penance. Sage Agastya then described in details how Ravan and Kumbhakarna practised austerities for ten thousand years by fasting and how sacrificed his nine heads into sacrificial fire by severing them one after another and when he was about to sever his only remaining head to propitiate Brahma, the latter appeared before him. Brahma was pleased with Ravan's penance and came to grant him boon. Ravan asked for immortality, but Brhma requested him to pray for any other boon. Then Dashagriva said, "Let me be invincible and indestructible of the Pakhis, Sarps, Daityas, Danvas, Rakshasas and of the gods. I do not take other creatures into account. I consider men and other creatures as mere straw." Brahma granted his prayer and offered two more-boons, that Ravan would get back his sacrificed heads and he would be able to assume any form he liked. As soon as Brahma uttered those words Ravan got back his lost heads.

When Brahma asked Vibhishan to pray for boon, Vibhishan expressed his thankfulness for that and said that his heart and soul might ever remain devoted to religion, so that he might always lead a virtuous life.

When Brahma was about to grant boon to Kumbhakarna, gods requested Brahma to desist from that, as Kumbhakarna was vicious by nature. Thereupon, Brahma deputed Saraswati, the goddess of speech, to Kumbhakarna asking her to confound Kumbhakarna's sense. When Brahma asked Kumbhakarna to pray for a boon, the latter prayed that he might enjoy the blessing of deep sleep for a long time. Brahma granted his prayer and his evil genius, Saraswati, left Kumbhakarna. Then Kumbhakarna came to his senses, and thought it was possibly due to the machinations of the gods that he had prayed for such a foolish boon. O King! Ravan and his brothers thus obtained their boons, and continued to live in their father's hermitage.

CHAPTER III

RAVAN'S ASCENDENCY.

When Sumali heard of the boons received by Ravan and his brother, he left the Patala region with his four counsellors, Maricha, Prahasta, Virupaksha and Mahodara. Sumali then saw Ravan and told him how they had been banished from Lanka, how they lived in fear of Vishnu, but their days of suffering must now end since Ravan had obtained boons from Brahma. The city of Lanka was in possession of Ravan's brother, Kuvera. Sumali then exhorted Ravan to take the city from Kuvera and rule over the people there. Ravan, at first, declined the offer and said that Kuvera was his elder brother and such a thing was not proper. Sumali then observed silence. Another time Prahasta incited Ravan saying "What you once said to Sumali, does not appear quite commendable to me. What is brotherhood amongst heroes? I have some thing to say on this point. There were two beautiful and affectionate sisters Diti and Aditi. Sage Kashyapa married the two. The gods were born of Aditi and the Daityas of Diti. In the beginning, the Daityas were the rulers of this earth. Afterwards, Vishnu destroyed them and made gods the rulers of heaven.

Ravan, after a little thought, gladly agreed to Prahasta's words, and on that very day started with the Rakshasas towards Lanka. Ravan sent Prahasta as an envoy to Kuvera and asked him to restore Lanka to the Rakshasas.

Kuvera at once consented to leave Lanka as it formerly belonged to the Rakshasas.

Kuvera after leaving Lanka to Dashagriva appeared before his father and asked his advice as to his place of residence. Thereupon, sage Vishrava said that this proposal was formerly broached by Dashagriva for which the sage took him to task. But since Dashagriva did not listen to his words, Kuvera, as he was aware of Brahma's boons he should now retire to the holy region of the Kailash.

mountains. The place was beautiful to live. Kuvera readily agreed to his father's proposal and repaired to the Kailash mountain with his wife, wealth and counsellors.

Prahasta in the meantime informed Dashagriva* about the departure of Kuvera. Then Dashagriva entered Lanka with his brothers.

Dashagriva in due time was installed on the throne of Lanka. He married his sister, Surpanakha with Vidyujjibha.

One day, Dashagriva was out on hunting, he met Diti's son, Maya strolling in the forest with his daughter. He questioned Maya about his wanderings in the forest. On this, Maya narrated his story. There was a beautiful nymph named Hema. Happily Maya got her and passed a thousand years in her company. Now for the last thirteen years she was in the region of gods. He was thus pining for her absence, and for that he was roaming about the forest. This daughter of his was born of Hema, who also gave birth to two sons, Mayavi and Dunduvhi Maya was in search of a worthy bridegroom for his daughter.

Thereupon, Dashagriva said that he was the son of sage Vishrava, grandson of Brahma.

Maya at once gave his daughter in marriage to Dashagriva though Maya was aware of the latter's fierce nature. Then Dashagriva procured two brides for Kumbhakarna and Vibhishan—Vajrajwala, grand daughter of Vairochana for Kumbhakarna, and Saroma, the virtuous daughter of the Gandharva king, Sailusha, for Vibhishan. Saroma was born on the bank of the Manasa Lake. Seeing the waters of the lake rising in the rains, the girl began to cry. Then her mother said, "Saroma Vardhata—O lake! Do not swell." From that time the girl was named Saroma.

Henceforth, Ravan and his brothers began to live in happiness in Lanka. Meghnad was born of Mandodari, whom you call Indrajit. As soon as he was born, he resounded the city of Lanka with his cries, like the rumbling

* The writer is persistent in the use of this particular name, which seldom occurs in the main epic.

of clouds, hence Dashagriva himself named the boy as Meghnad.

Meghnad began to grow like a flame of fire hidden within the logs of wood.

CHAPTER IV

EXPLOITS OF RAVAN

One day, heavy Sleep, appeared before Kumbhakarna, at the direction of Brahma. Kumbhakarna at once felt drowsy and asked Ravan to build a house for him. A spacious and a beautiful building was constructed and Kumbhakarna lay there buried in deep sleep. In the meantime, Ravan began to molest the Yakshas, Gandharvas and the gods, as the wind uproots a tree.

Then Kuvera sent an envoy to Ravan. The envoy came to Vibhishan who received him with due honours, and enquired about the cause of his presence. The envoy then told Ravan that he had been deputed by his brother, requesting him to stop his further acts of depradations and vice, and enjoined him to follow the path of virtue, if possible. Though he had repeatedly violated Kuvera's words, but the latter was not angry with him. Kuvera was living in friendship of god Sankara, and at the injunction of that god he requested Ravan to give up his vicious practices and crimes, for the gods were devising plans for his destruction. At these words, Ravan grew furious with anger and said, the fool has boasted of his friendship with god Sankara. So long I spared him as my brother, but now I shall conquer him by might. With these words Dashagriva killed the envoy with a stroke of his sword.

Afterwards, proud Ravan set out with Prahasta, Mahodara, Maricha, Shuka, Saran and Dhumrakha, for the conquest of Kuvera. A great battle ensued between Kuvera and Ravan.* Both the Yakshas and the Rakshasas showed their great valour and might. But Kuvera was worsted at last, and Ravan brought down the Puspaka chariot, as a booty of his triumph, swift as the flight of thought.

Victorious Ravan was returning in triumph towards Lanka, but suddenly the Puspaka was stopped. As Ravan was enquiring about the cause of this sudden stoppage, a grim figure with a shaven head, short arms and of brown colour fearlessly approached Ravan and asked Dashagriva to go back as god Mahadeva was dallying in amorous sports with Parvati in that forest. This was Nandi. These words of Nandiswar enraged Ravan. He jumped down from the Puspaka and went to meet Mahadeva. But as he proceeded he found Nandiswar standing with a trident like a second Mahadeva. Ravan laughed at the hideous monkey-like face of Nandi. Thereupon, Nandi grew angry and said, since you laugh at my ape-like expression, for the destruction of you as well as of your brood, formidable apes will be born on earth. I could have slain you just now, but your vices will effect your ruin, hence I refrain from it.

As soon as these words were uttered, the gods rejoiced in heaven. But Ravan paid no heed to Nandi's words, he said that since the mountain obstructed the course of the Puspaka, he would at once pull down the rock. Ravan then tore down the rock, the denizens of the Kailash began to tremble with fear. But Mahadeva then pressed the rock with the light pressure of his toe, and Ravan cried out under its tremendous pressure. The counsellors of Ravan was struck with panic and asked Ravan to appease Mahadeva. Thereupon, Ravan began to sing the glory of Mahadeva in devotion. Mahadeva was pleased at this and said 'since you frightened the three worlds with your tremendous cries you will be called Ravan' Ravan then prayed for weapon by

* The fight is a repetition of the battle between Ram and Ravan and nothing else.

which he would be able to conquer all. Thereupon, Mahadeva presented Ravan with a formidable sword named Chandrahash, and asked him never to slight the sword, in that case it would return to Mahadeva. Then Ravan got upon the chariot after paying due respects to Mahadeva.

One day, when Ravan was strolling in the Himalayas, he saw a beautiful young girl engaged in penance. Ravan approached her and declared that such austerities were not worthy of her beauty and youth, and he enquired who was she. Thereupon, the girl replied that she was the daughter of Rajarshi Kushadhwaja, and her name was Vedavati. Many worthy suitors sued for her hands, but her father wanted to marry her to Vishnu. At this the Daitya Chief Sumbha in wrath slew her father at night. Her mother burnt herself on the funeral pyre of her husband. She was henceforth engaged in prayers to revenge her father's death. The girl then asked Ravan to go away. But the Rakshasa king was smitten with love and said what was Vishnu in comparison with him. Vedavati asked Ravan not to villify Vishnu, the lord of the Universe. Thereupon, Ravan forcibly seized her by the hair. Vedavati then kindled a fire to burn herself for that insult. Vedavati said, "Thou wicked Villain! Since you have insulted me by seizing me by the hair, I shall be reborn for your destruction, though of course it is not possible for a woman to slay a wicked man. If I destroy you by my curse, then the merits of my penance will be diminished. However, if I have done any act of virtue, if I have been devout at all, then, I shall be born unto a virtuous man like his daughter, though not born of any woman's womb."

With these words Vedavati entered the flame. Flowers were showered from heaven. O, Ram! that Vedavati is the daughter of Rajarshi Janaka and is your wife. You are Vishnu incarnate. The enemy whom Vedavati was about to destroy by the fire of her wrath, has been destroyed by the prowess of your arms. This Vedavati like a flame of fire will rise (be born) again and again from the ploughed field."

CHAPTER V.
FEATS OF RAVAN.

After Vedavati had entered into flame, Ravan, the king of Rakshasas, began to wander over the earth in his Puspaka chariot. In the course of his wanderings, Ravan saw in the province of Ushirvija, king Marutta engaged in a sacrifice with the Devas. Saint Samvartta, brother of Vrihaspati was engaged as a priest in that sacrifice. Seeing that invincible Raksha, Indra assumed the form of a peacock; Yama that of a crow; Kuvera that of a lizard, and Varuna the form of a swan. Other gods too disguised themselves in the forms of different animals. In the mean time, Ravan entered the sacrificial ground in the form of an unclean dog and addressing king Marutta said, "Either fight with me, or acknowledge defeat at my hand."

Marutta asked, "Who are you?" Ravan said, he was Ravan, the younger brother of Kuvera, and that he had captured the Vimana by vanquishing Kuvera. Marutta said, "Thou art really a worthy person since thou hast conquered thy elder brother, but wait, I shall soon despatch you to the region of death."

King Marutta with these words set out with bow and arrows. At that, priest Samvartta prevented him saying that if the sacrifice remained incomplete there would come the end of his life; moreover, he was engaged in a sacred sacrifice, why should he then surrender himself to wrath? Thereupon, Marutta desisted from fighting. The Raksha counsellor Shuka exclaimed victory to Ravan, and Ravan began to devour the Rigis. Ravan, then, again set out in his journey. After the departure of Ravan, the gods assumed their own forms. Indra then addressing the peacock said, "I have been highly pleased with you, henceforth you won't have any fear of snakes. Hundreds of eyes will adorn your tail, and when I shall pour forth heavy rains you will feel greatly delighted. These are the tokens of my pleasure. O king! Formerly the tail of the peacock was simply blue, but since that boon it came to be adorned with eyes."

Then Yama, the lord of death, said to the crow, 'I have been immensely pleased with you. You will not feel the agonies of death that are suffered by other creatures. By my blessing you won't have any fear of death. (You will live so long as you are not killed by man.' Then Varuna said to the swan, 'I am much pleased with you. Your colour will be white as foam and the moon. You will live happily in water.' O King! Formerly, the colour of the swan was not faultlessly white in every part. Kuyera said to the lizard that it would always shine like gold and would be of golden hue. Thus blessing the animals in various ways the gods retired from Marutta's sacrifice.

In the meantime, Ravan went round the world and challenged every powerful chief to battle and asked them either to fight, or to acknowledge defeat. Prudent and virtuous kings after deliberations said that they acknowledged his prowess. In this way, kings Dushyanta, Suratha, Gandhi, Gaya, Puraraya acknowledged their defeat.

Ravan then arrived at Ayodhya, the capital of Anaranya and challenged the latter to fight.

Anaranya was highly incensed at that boast. A severe fight ensued between the two, but the Kshatriyas were defeated by Ravan. Ravan taunted Anaranya for his self confidence and his ignorance of Ravan's prowess. Anaranya, however, meekly submitted saying, "O Rakshasa! What could I do, since fate is formidable. Why do you brag in vain. It is fate that is responsible for my defeat and you are only an instrument for it. But I want to speak something about this insult offered to the Ikshvaku line. If I have practised any religious rite at all, then my words will come to pass. O Rakshasa! In this Ikshvaku line there will be born a great hero named Ram and you will meet with your death at his hands."

Anaranya then ascended the heaven and Ravan left the place.

When Ravan was thus wandering over the earth spreading terror to man, sage Narada appeared before him. Ravan after greeting him enquired about his welfare and the cause of his presence.

Thereupon, Narada said, "O Rakshasa chief, just wait. I have been greatly pleased with your prowess, and I have something to say to you. You are invincible of the Devas and the Danavas. Men are afraid of you, then why do you tyrannise over them? Who feels inclined to destroy them who are devoid of the sense of right and wrong, and are victims of various dangers and diseases? Do not destroy them. They are doomed to ruin, smitten by fate. Just think what kind of creature man is. Though they wallow in ignorance, yet they have fits of heroism. Sometimes, they pass their time in merry-making, in singing and dancing and sometimes in weeping. To speak the truth, man has been doomed to ruin for his affections and lust. Men are subject to death, they live in fear of death. Now, conquer Yama, the lord of death then you will, in fact, conquer the Yama, the lord of death then you will, in fact, conquer the whole mankind."

Then Ravan said that he was bound for the Patala region, after conquering the Nagas and the Devas he would churn the ocean for nectar. Narada said, "The way to the region of Yama is extremely perilous and none but you can go there."

Then Ravan agreed to Narada's request and proceeded towards the South, the region of Death. When Ravan set out for conquest of Yama, Narada thought how would Ravan conquer Death, the terror of the creation, and he went to the region of Yama to witness the thing with his own eyes.

Narada hastily arrived at the region of Death and found Yama, by placing a fire before him, was rewarding or punishing people according to their merits and demerits. Yama enquired after the cause of the saint's arrival.

In the meantime, the chariot Vimana was seen glittering like the sun, its bright sheen illumined the dark region of Death. In that light, Ravan saw people reaping the fruits of their actions.

At one place, the minions of Yama were tying up the sinners, and they were bitterly wailing; at another place, hell-dogs and worms were tearing off the flesh; at another place, horrible groans and cries were rising from some

quarter; at one place some were made to cross and recross the Vaitarani, the river of blood; some were rolling on heated sands, some were cut into pieces. Some were hurled into the terrible Raurava, and some into the rivers of salt. Some were hungry some were thirsty. They were all lean and gaunt like skeletons, their hairs were unkempt and their bodies stained with fecal matter and filth. Again there were others who were regaling themselves with music and women for their virtuous deeds who in life had given cows were enjoying milk; who had given food enjoying delicacies; and who had given shelter obtained homes full of riches and women.*

Then Ravan rescued by force all persons from hellish tortures. The sinners were delightfully surprised; but the minions of Death-ghosts and goblins at once attacked Ravan for his interference and a tremendous noise was heard and a terrible confusion fell upon hell.

Warlike Ravan then discharged his arrows at the attendants of Yama. In the course of fighting the hosts of Yama became worsted, and Yama, from the victorious shouts of the Rakshasas, could understand that his followers had been defeated by Ravan. Yama then himself went to fight against Ravan. Yama ascended his chariot. In front of him stood Death itself with a formidable mace, and by his side was the Fire—like the fatal sceptre of Time. All creatures became terrified: even the gods were fright-

* Almost all the poets have drawn upon immemorial traditions about heaven and hell representing one as the region of all sufferings and woes; it is only Dante that has displayed wonderful originality in his conceptions, specially about his Purgatory and Inferno of course we cannot expect such sublime and beautiful things from a third class poet-aster of the Uttara Kanda. Reason has attacked the eternal gloom of hell, till in the prophetic words of Shelley:-

—“The hour arrives when they shall be no types of things which are.” Fear of hell has however a didactic value, for it has greater hold upon the popular mind than the sublime truths of the philosophy.

ened by it, but Ravan was undismayed. A severe fight ensued between Yama and Ravan and it lasted for several nights. Ravan pierced Death with four arrows, the charioteer with seven and with countless shafts the chest of Yama. Then Death in wrath said to Yama, "O King! Just give me leave, I shall immediately destroy this wicked Rakshasa. It is my nature, that whoever will come within my sight will never survive. I have destroyed Hiranya-kashipu, Namuchi, Shambara, Nishandi, Vritra, Dhumaketu, Vairochana, Vali, Daitya King, Shambhu, Van, Rajarsha, Gandharvas, Uragas, Rishis, Yakshasas, Pakshis, Apsaras, and what more at the time of universal destruction I have destroyed the earth with its everything. What to speak of Ravan?" Yama asked Death to stop, saying that he would himself destroy Ravan. With those words Yama raised his fatal Sceptre. Ravan was scorched by the intense glare of the sceptre.

In the meantime, Brahma appeared on the spot and said that Ravan had been rendered invincible by his own boon, so his words prove false if Yama killed Ravan. Hence Yama held back the fatal sceptre. Since Brahma was their chief, Yama withdrew from the field of battle and Dasha-griva issued forth victorious from the region of Yama; and the gods with Brahma repaired to the heavenly region.

It is a curious fact that all the poets have drawn upon immemorial traditions about Ravan and his representations are as the region of all suffering and woes; it is only Dante that has displayed wonderful originality in his conception, especially about his Purgatory and Inferno of course we cannot expect such sublime and beautiful things from a third class poet-master of the Uttar Kanda. Ravan has attracted the eternal gloom of hell, till in the prophetic words of Shelley:

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CHAPTER VI.

THE VICTORIOUS CAREER OF RAVAN.

After conquering Yama, Ravan met the Rakshasas with a bleeding body. Maricha and others hailed Ravan with joy for his great victory.

Ravan then got upon the Puspaka chariot and entered into the ocean for getting into the Patala* region—the abode of the Uragas. Ravan entered Bhogavati; the city of Vasuki and reduced the Nagas to submission. Thence Ravan proceeded to the City of Jewels, it was the home of the Daityas called Nivat Kavachas. The Rakshasas challenged them to battle. The Nivat Kavachas were exceedingly powerful, and a terrible fight ensued between the two.

In the meantime, Brahma appeared and asked the Nivat Kavachas to desist from the fight and asked them to conclude peace with Ravan. Ravan then made friendship with the Nivat Kavachas and learnt various kinds of Black Magic from them.

From that place Ravan came to the city of Ashman, there lived a class of Daityas named Kalkeyas. Ravan with Vidyutjibha—husband of Surpanakha—destroyed the mighty Kalkeyas.

Thence, Ravan proceeded to Varun Puri. It was White like the Kailasha mountain; there lived Kamadhenu† Surabhi and from the flow of her milk, the ocean of milk had been created. From that rose the silvery moon, and Swadha of the ancestors and Neeladri. Ravan wheeled round Surabhi and entered the city of Varuna. He was prevented by the serpents, but he overpowered them soon.

* Some are of opinion that Patal means America, it was called Patala because it is on the opposite side of Asia. Some Hindu relics have been discovered in the jungles of America.

† A cow that could give anything asked of her.

and asked them to inform Varun about his challenge to a fight. At that, the sons and grandsons of Varuna became incensed with wrath and bravely faced Ravan with their men, but they were worsted in fight. Ravan then asked the sons and grandsons of Varuna to inform Varuna of his advent. Thereupon, Prahash, Varuna's minister, said, that Varuna had gone to Brahmaloaka for hearing music. Then Ravan proclaimed his name in the city and issued forth elated with the joy of victory.†

In this way Ravan roamed about the earth, spreading terror to all. Whenever he found any beautiful woman he forcibly abducted her putting her relations to death. As the ocean is swelled by the waters of the rivers, so tears of desolate women filled his chariot. Dark tresses of these captive women were long, faces like the moon, breasts hard and plump, their waists slim, hips heavy, and their colour was like gold. They looked like so many daughters of the gods. Their sights rendered the chariot hot. They all looked sad, each one was lamenting her lot. It is a sin to abduct another's wife, and Ravan was doomed for this act of impiety.

Ravan thus came back to Lanka after conquering the

† Five episodes have been interpolated after this.

In the first episode, Ravan encountered a terrible, dark man who challenged him to a fight. Ravan grew nervous and was frightened by his very sight. That man was a sentry of Vali, Ravan appeared before Vali, kept under bondage by Hari. In the second episode, the sun-god acknowledges supremacy of Ravan. In the third episode Ravan fought with King Mandhata of Ayodhya in the chandraloka, and at last peace was concluded between the two by the interference of Maharshis Pulastya and Galava. In the fourth episode, when Ravan was about to smother the moon, Brahma appeared and asked Ravan to desist and gave him a Mantra to avoid death, the mantra consists of a hymn to Mahadeva. In the fifth episode, Ravan met with his defeat at the hand of Kapil, whose each and every limb seemed to be a god transformed into it!

world. Then a sister of Ravan came to him with tears in her eyes and said that it was for Ravan that she had become a widow, for her husband was killed amongst the Kalkeyas, whom Ravan conquered by his prowess. Ravan apologised to his sister, saying that he did it without knowing the thing and asked her to go and live with Khara, her mother's sister's son, who would always look to her wishes. Then Khara with fourteen thousand Rakshasas entered the Dandaka forest, and Surpanakha lived with him in happiness.

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CHAPTER VII.

MEGHNAD'S SACRIFICE.

One day, Ravan entered Nikumbhila and found Meghnad engaged in a sacrifice. Ravan deeply embraced Meghnad and asked what he was doing. At that time, Meghnad was observing silence so he did not make any reply.

Sukrachariya just to prevent Meghnad from breaking his vow of silence said, "O King! I shall tell you everything. Your son has performed seven sacrifices named Agnistoma, Aswamedha, Rajsuya, Gomedha, Vaishnava and other one's."

"Having performed the difficult sacrifice of Maheswara, he has obtained boons from Pashupsti himself. He can go wherever he wills, he can live in the sky and he has obtained Tamashi Maya. By this Maya, darkness is produced, and for that none can know anything. Besides these, this great hero has obtained an invincible bow, inexhaustible quiver and formidable weapons for the destruction of the enemy. The sacrifice will be completed this day, and we were waiting for you."

Ravan said, "you have not done well by worshipping Indra and other Gods with sacrificial things. However, what is done can not be undone. Now let us return home."

Then Ravan, Indrajit and Vibhishan entered the palace and got beautiful women down from the chariot. Seeing Ravan greatly attached to those women, Vibhishan said, "You have committed such sinful acts for the destruction of your family and fame. You have forcibly abducted all these women by causing pain to others, but here warlike Madhu has taken away Kumbhinashi."

"What is all this?" said Ravan, I do not know anything about it."

"This is the result of your own misdeed," angrily replied Vibhishan. Malyavan is the elder brother of our maternal grand-father, Sumali. Kumbhinashi is his grand-daughter and the daughter of Anala, our maternal aunt, hence she is our sister. Madhu has taken her away by force. At that time, Indrajit was engaged in sacrifice and myself in meditation in water, and Kumbhakarna deep buried in sleep. When I came to know of this, I forgave Madhu, thinking that our cousin had got a worthy spouse."

Ravan was beside himself in rage and issued orders for immediate mobilisation against Madhu. The Mighty Rakshasa army got ready for the fight. Indrajit was in the vanguard, Ravan in the middle and Kumbhakarna in the rear. Vibhishan remained in Lanka. Seeing them going against the Gods, the Daityas who were sworn enemies of the Gods, started against the latter.

Ravan on reaching Madhupur could not find Madhu, but his sister Kumbhinashi threw herself in fear at the feet of Ravan. Ravan pardoned her and asked what he could do for her. Kumbhinashi asked Ravan to spare her from the pangs of widowhood. Ravan granted her request and asked where Madhu was. Kumbhinashi then roused Madhu from sleep and introduced Ravan to him, she asked Madhu to help Ravan—his brother-in-law in his campaign against the Gods. Madhu agreed and appeared before Ravan and asked him to accept his hospitality. Ravan then encamped his army on the Kailasha mountain.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EPISODE OF RAMBHA.

The sun was set, and the white moon shone over the hill. The army was enjoying the sweet balm of sleep. At that time, Ravan got, upon a peak and surveyed all round him. Ravan saw at a distance, bright, clusters of Kannikar, Kadamva, Vakul, Champaka, Asoka, Punnaga, Mandar, Chyuta, Patal, Lodhra, Priyangu, Arjun, Ketaka, Tagar, Piyala and other forest flowers decorating the valley. The Kinnaras were singing sweet songs of love, and intoxicated Vidyadharas were sporting in amorous dalliance with women, with eyes red with wine. The nymphs were singing at the court of Kuvera, and their silvery notes, like the sweet jingling of bells, could be heard. Summer flowers were fluttering in the breeze and filled the whole place with their rich fragrance, and many blossoms loosened from their stalks silently covered the green. Sweet scented breeze began to fan the amorous flame of Ravan. Ravan was then completely under the spell of sweet music, the beauty of flowers and the hill and the touch of the delightfully cool breeze. Ravan heaved windy sighs again and again.

At that time, Rambha, beautiful like the full moon, was going through the army line. Her body was smeared with sandal, and her head was crowned with a garland of Mandara flowers. She was going to enjoy herself with the gods. Her heavy hips were adorned with a strong girdle, her eyes were beautiful as if inviting amorous sports. With Sandal paste and ornaments of summer flowers she looked like a second Lakshmi. She had a thin blue cloth in her wearing. Her face was like the moon, brows drawn like two bows, thighs round and tapering like the trunk of an elephant, and palms soft like tender leaves. Ravan was at once smitten with lust and caught hold of Rambha, cast down with shyness. Ravan asked, "O, my beauty! Whither are you tending your steps? For whose enjoyment are you going? Who is that fortunate person? Your lips

are sweet and fragrant like the petals of a lotus ; who will drink their honey ? Your breasts are like two golden pitchers, hard and beautiful ; who will enjoy their delightful touch ? Your thighs are like two golden pillars, who will mount over them ? None amongst the gods is fortunate like me, you should not, therefore, leave me behind. Just take your rest on the rock. I am lord of the lords of the heaven. Please fulfil my prayer."

Rambha trembled at these words of Ravan. She said, "Be propitious to me. You are my object of reverence. I am, in fact, your daughter-in-law."

Ravan said, "If you be my son's wife, then you are my daughter-in-law indeed."

Rambha said, "Nalakuvera is the dear son of Kuvera, your brother, that Nalakuvera has sent for me and I am going to him. He is virtuous and he is waiting for me. Kindly let me go."

"O my beauty ! You are describing yourself as my daughter-in-law, singifying thereby that you are the only wife of your husband. But nymphs have no husbands, even the Gods treat them as their wives."

With these words, Ravan threw Rambha down on the ground and began to enjoy her.

After her release from Ravan's embrace, Rambha looked like a river rendered turbid by an elephant. Her tresses became loose, her garland and ornaments slipped from her. Rambha came to Nalakuvera threw herself at his feet and narrated everything to him.

Nalakuvera then by his Yogic power found out the truth and uttered a deep curse on Ravan. My gentle woman ! Ravan has used force upon you against your will, hence forward if he uses force upon any woman against her will, his head will instantly burst into pieces."

As soon as the curse was uttered, shouts of jubilation were heard in heaven, and all chaste women were extremely delighted at Nalakuvera's curse.

CHAPTER IX.

RAID AGAINST HEAVEN

Ravan then arrived at Indraloka. Indra grew anxious at the news of Ravan's arrival and asked Adityas and other gods to get ready to fight against Ravan.

Indra being greatly smitten with fear went to Vishnu for his advice, as how he could win victory over Ravan. Vishnu said, that Ravan was invincible on account of Brahma's boon so he could not accede to Indra's request to destroy Ravan. Vishnu assured Indra that he would kill Ravan afterwards, but not now. He advised Indra to fight against Ravan in the meantime.

Then all the gods gathered for fighting against Ravan, and terrible battle commenced between the Gods and the Rakshasas. Both were inexhaustible in battle.

Indra, his son Jayanta fought bravely along with the Vasus and other Gods. But Meghnad was more than a match for them. He smothered all the gods by his wonderful prowess.

Indra, fought resolutely against Ravan, but in vain. Meghnad availed himself of his Black Art and made himself invisible, Indra became exhausted and Meghnad took him captive by his magic. Then the Rakshasas ceased from fighting, and Ravan and Meghnad repaired to Lanka with Indra as their prisoner.

After the defeat of Indra by Meghnad, all the gods headed by Brahma came to Lanka. Ravan was then seated in the throne-room surrounded by his son and brothers.

Brahma said, "My boy, Ravan! I have been much pleased with your son Meghnad, he has conquered heaven by his prowess. I have been really astonished by his valour and generosity. Meghnad will henceforth be known as Indrajit, He will be invincible in war, now release Indra, and tell me what do you want from the gods for this release.

Indrajit said, "O Lord! Give me immortality as ransom for Indra's release."

Brahma said, "There is none immortal on earth, ask for some other boon."

Indrajit said, "O, Lord! If I do not get immortality, then I ask for another boon for the release of Indra. When I shall worship fire with due rites, and shall set out for the conquest of my enemies, a chariot yoked with steeds will rise from fire and none will be able to slay me so long I shall be seated in that chariot, but I shall be destroyed if I be engaged in fight before the completion of my worship with due rites. Everybody asks for immortality by virtue of Tapa, but I wish to attain that by my valour."

Brahma said, "My boy! Your prayer will be granted." Indra was then released, and the gods went to heaven with Indra.

From that time Indra became morose and pensive. Brahma then told Indra that his defeat was due to the curse uttered against him by Gautama, for his violation of Gautama's wife, Ahalya. Brahma asked Indra to perform the Vaishnava sacrifice and he would be purified by it. He further told Indra that his son, Jayanta was alive living with the Danava king, Pulama. Indra performed the sacrifice and began to rule over the heaven.

Ram and Lakshman expressed their great surprise and admitted that valour and prowess of Indrajit were indeed wonderful.

Vibhishan observed what sage Agastya had said was perfectly true.

After the defeat of Indra by Meghnad, all the gods headed by Brahma came to Lanka. Ravana was then seated in the throne-room surrounded by his son and brothers.

Brahma said, "My boy, Ravana! I have been much pleased with your son Meghnad, he has conquered heaven by his prowess. I have been really astonished by his valour and generosity. Meghnad will henceforth be known as Indrajit. He will be invincible in war, now release Indra, and tell me what do you want from the gods for this release."

CHAPTER X
 RAVAN'S DISCOMFITURE.

He Ram then asked Agastya, "When Ravan was thus tyrannising over the world, was there no hero living? Was there no Kshatriya king?"

Agastya said, "Once upon a time Ravan arrived at Mahishmati city. Its king, Arjun, was formidable like Firegod. When Ravan reached the city, the Haihaya king was out and was sporting with women in the Narmoda stream. Ravan then came to the Vindhya mountain, hearing that Arjun was sporting with women in the Narmada. Ravan then came to the Narmada. The river Narmada lay before him like a beautiful woman—the flower plants on its bank were its scarf, Chakravaka couple its breasts, spacious banks its thighs, rows of ducks and swans its girdle, pollens of flowers its cosmetic, foam its white cloth and the blooming lotuses its eyes!

Ravan got down from his chariot and entered into the pleasant stream for bath. Ravan greatly admired the beauty of Narmoda. He asked his men to take their bath and himself began to worship Siva on its bank.

At a little distance from that spot, Arjuna was sporting with women. Arjun stopped the current by the force of his arms. The river swelled up and water rose above the banks; Ravan enquired of his men about the cause of this sudden rise of the river. Suka and Saran, Ravan's advisers, reported to Ravan about the real cause. Ravan then went to fight against Arjun and challenged him to a fight. Arjun's followers asked Ravan to accept their hospitality for the night and to fight in the morning. But Ravan's followers overcame their resistance, when Arjun heard of the defeat of his men, he was beside himself in rage, he at once chased the Rakshasas with his mace. Ravan came forward and began to fight with all his might but Arjun became victorious and entered his city taking Ravan a prisoner with him.

Sage Pulasta heard of Ravan's discomfiture and being moved by fatherly affection came to Arjun and prayed for his release. Arjun considered himself fortunate for his visit and once agreed to Ravan's release. In this world there are mighty people, but there are mightier, so a prudent man should not despise any body."

Ravan soon forgot the ignominy of defeat by being well treated by Arjun, known as Kartavirjarjun. He was again out in his conquering tour and arrived at Kishkindhya. At that time, the king of Kishkindhya, Vali, was not in the city, but was engaged in meditation and in evening-rites on the shore of the Southern Sea. Ravan hastily arrived there, but Vali ignored his presence as the lion does that of a rabbit. Vali then thought of taking Ravan within his grasp and to repair to other three seas with him. As Ravan came near Vali, Vali remained silent, he did not break the chanting of Vedas, but silently took Ravan in his clutch and rose into sky. Followers of Ravan ran after Vali, to release Ravan from Vali's grasp. Vali performed his Sandhya rites on the banks of the four oceans without any hurry; and after that, Vali arrived at the garden of Kishkindhya and released Ravan from his clutch. Ravan was greatly surprised by Vali's prowess and contracted friendship with him, in presence of sacred fire. Vali's prowess was unlimited, but you have killed that Vali."

Ram then humbly submitted that undoubtedly Ravan and Vali were exceedingly mighty, but their might could not be compared with that of Hanuman, and he cited the heroic deeds of Hanuman.

Agastya agreed with Ram, but said that Hanuman was ignorant of his own prowess due to a curse. Agastya then said how Hanuman after his birth, jumped for catching the bright sun thinking it to be a red ripe fruit. At that, Rahu was mightily frightened and informed Indra about the encroachment upon his ancient region. Indra came out in hurry. Hanuman again jumped for Rahu, Rahu moved away in fear. Indra not finding Rahu struck Hanuman with his thunderbolt. Wind-god was greatly angry at this and began to injure the creation. Brahma then brought about a conciliation between the two.

Indra put a jewelled necklace on Hanuman's neck and said that Hanuman would not die stricken by thunder-bolt, Sun-god gave him energy, Varun, Yama, Kuvera and Sankara blessed the child. Brahma told the Wind-god that Hanuman would be accomplished in all the Shastras, would be invincible in battle and would be immortal and curse of Brahmins would not affect him. Hanuman began to molest the Rishis in pride of his boons. Then the Rishis of Bhrigu and Angirasha lines cursed Hanuman that he would forget for a long time his real prowess. When there was a fight between Sugriva and Vali, Hanuman was on Sugriva's side; Hanuman, for that curse, forgot his real prowess and remained inactive like a tied-up elephant. In cleverness and patience, in might and wisdom, in energy and learning, in sweetness and sobriety there is none like Hanuman. When this hero read grammar he used to visit the Sun-god from the Udaya Giri to the Astagiri. He is well versed in the Sutras Vrittis, Arthapada and Mahabhasya.* There is none so deeply versed in the Vedas like him. He has surpassed even Vrihaspati in learning. None can withstand his prowess, formidable like the Doomsday-fire."

"It is for you that the gods have created Hanuman Sugriva, Mainda, Dvidida, Neela, Tara, Tareya, Nala, Gavaya, Gavaksha and others. I have told you what you asked to state."

Ram, Lakshman and others were greatly astonished at Agastya's words. Ram said, "Since I have been favoured by your visit, it is clear that my ancestors and gods are pleased with me. Now I want to perform a sacrifice, will you kindly help me in that?"

Agastya and other Rishis agreed to Ram's proposal and left for their respective places. Ram then thought about the sacrifice.

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* Different parts of Grammar.

CHAPTER XI.

DEPARTURE OF THE CHIEFS.

In the morning, Ram was roused from sleep by the chantings of the bards, who sang his praise, and after morning ablutions, sat upon his throne and appeared like a second Indra.* He then looked after all the works of administration in details.

King Janaka who was stopping at Ayodhya returned to his own capital.

Then Kashiraj went to his own capital, and after him, three hundred princes, being honoured by Ram, went to their respective places. They were called by Bharat for Ram's assistance, and they regretted that they could not be of any use to Ram because the fight was over. They offered rich presents to Ram.

* There are again four interpolated episodes. In the first episode, Ram asked, that Riksharaj was the father of Vali and Sugriva, but who was their mother? Agastya said that a monkey was born out of two drops of tears that automatically dropped from Brahma's eyes. One day, he saw his shadow on water in the Sumeru. He took it for an enemy and plunged into the lake to fight against it. The monkey was at once metamorphosed into a beautiful damsel. Indra, as he was passing by that place, became highly infatuated by her rare beauty; and his seminal fluid fell upon that damsel's head; from that Vali was born. Later on, the sun-god was greatly incensed by her beauty and his seminal fluid fell on the shoulders of that woman; from that Sugriva was born. After that, the damsel was again changed into a monkey. The monkey, Riksharaj, then took his two sons and went to Brahma. Brahma assigned to him the kingdom of Kishkindhya, full of flowers and fruits. In the second, third and the fourth episodes, Agastya narrated the secret cause why Ravan abducted Sita. Ravan once heard from Sanat Kumar that whoever is slain by Hari, enjoys eternal bliss, so His wrath is a blessing in

Ram, by his cordial friendship and rich presents, personally honoured Hanuman, Sugriva, Angada, Neela, Nala, Keshari, Gandhamadan, Kumud, Sushena, Panasa, Mainda, Dvidda, Jamvuvan, Gavaksha, Vinata, Dhumra, Valimukha, Prajangha, Saunada, Darimukha, Dadhimukha, Indrajanu and other Vanara chiefs. They all stayed with him for several months.

One day, Ram told Sugriva to repair to his own kingdom and to rule there in peace and prosperity. He also told the same thing to Vibhishan. The Vanaras and the Rakshasas then began to praise Ram for his nobility and generosity.

But Hunuman said, "O King! Let my mind ever remain devoted to you, and let not my feelings undergo any change. Let me live so long the story of Ram will last. Let the nymphs always sing to my ears the glory of your divine life. I shall chase away the sorrow of separation from you by that song as the wind drives away the clouds."

Ram then stood up and embraced Hanuman in deep affection and said, "Your desire will be fulfilled. So long my story will continue, you, with your reputation, will exist. For each and every act of help rendered by you I should pay you with my life, and for all your acts I shall ever remain grateful to you. A man wants return for his services in times of difficulty. Let no danger or difficulty befall you at any moment. Let all your help end with my body."

With these words, Ram took off a shining necklace from his neck and put it on Hanuman's. With that necklace Hanuman looked like the Sumeru hill bright with the silvery rays of the moon.

disguise. Sanat Kumar said that none can see Hari, except those who receive His blessing. But Hari would be born as Ram and Lakshmi would be born as Sita. Ravan then thought of incurring enmity of Ram and decided to abduct Sita. In the fifth episode, Agastya described how Ravan was smothered like an worm by an amazon of Shetadwipa.

All then in deep reluctance took their leave of Ram, and each one felt sorry, as one feels when parting with life.

After the departure of the Vanarās, Ram with his brothers passed his days in happiness and peace.

CHAPTER XII.

DIVERSIONS OF RAM.

One day, Ram heard a sweet voice from above. "O King ! Just look up to me, I have come back from Kuvera's place, and my name is Puspaka. Kuvera has been greatly pleased for the destruction of Ravan and his brood, he has, therefore, asked me to come back to you and to carry you. This will give him great satisfaction, so please accept me."

Ram then accepted the Puspaka and told the Puspaka to roam in the sky at its own will, Puspaka then went to its own place of desire.

Bharat then said to Ram, "O, worshipful lord ! You are a god ; during your reign even non-human objects have obtained power of speech ! For a long time, people are free from disease, even old people have not died. Women deliver good sons. All are hale and hearty. The citizens are extremely happy. The clouds rain in due time and the wind always blows favourably. All people—citizens and countrymen alike—say, let us always have such a king."

Ram was greatly pleased at these words of Bharat.

Once Ram, entered the Asoka garden, full of blossoms and fruits. It was vocal with the sweet notes of various birds. The garden was encircled by a mcāt. The trees of

the garden seemed to vie with each other in the profusion of flowers. The ground was covered with flowers like the sky with the stars.

Entering the Asoka, Ram sat upon a marble seat covered with a fine coverlet, and gave Sita pure Mairaya wine to drink. At that time, the servants brought well cooked meat and various kinds of fruits. Beautiful Kinnaris and nymphs, intoxicated with wine and adorned with jewels and ornaments, began to regale Ram with their songs and dancing. Ram thus passed long time in enjoyment. He looked after royal business in the forenoon and passed the end of the day in the harem. Janaki too passed the first half of the day by attending on her mothers-in-law and then, after wearing fine apparel, went to Ram as Sachi went to Indra. Ram was greatly pleased with her sight.

After sometime, Ram asked Sita, 'My darling ! I find all the symptoms of pregnancy in you, tell me what is your desire. what can I do for you ?'

Janaki with a gentle smile said, 'My Lord ! I wish to revisit the sacred hermitages of the Rishis and want to go to those holy men. I wish to spend at least one night in their hermitage. This is my heart's desire.'

Ram said, "Your desire will be satisfied, you will start even tomorrow for the hermitages." Saying this, Ram left Janaki for the Audience Hall.

When Ram was seated in the Central hall, many accomplished men came and gathered round Ram. They began to indulge in various jokes and lively talks. Bejoy, Madhumatta, Kashyapa, Mangala, Kula, Suraji, Kalia, Bhadra, Dantavakra, Sumaghada and others were engaged in mirth-provoking conversations.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ACCUSATION.

When the courtiers were engaged in merry talks, Ram asked, "Tell me, Bhadra ! What is the current topic of the people in the country? Do they speak anything about Sita ? What do they say about Bharat and Satrugna ? What do the people speak about mother Kaikeyi ? Do they always talk about their king !"

Bhadra then respectfully submitted, "When the citizens speak anything about you, they always say good things about yourself. They often talk of your victory over Ravan."

Ram then asked, "Tell me, Bhadra ! What the citizens say ? Tell me everything good and evil. I shall then act accordingly, do what is good and avoid what is wrong. Tell me everything without any fear or reserve."

Thereupon, Bhadra with joined palms said, "Hear me then ! O, Lord ! What the citizens say everywhere. They say that building a bridge over the sea is an unheard of feat, they have not heard of any such thing about the former kings, or about the gods, or the Danava. Ram has destroyed formidable Ravan with his powerful hosts. He has rescued the Rakshasas, Vanaras and the Bhullakas into submission. He has rescued Sita and brought her home by keeping back jealousy. We know not how strong is Ram's desire for the company of Sita ! Ravan forcibly abducted Sita, took her on his lap and kept her in the Asoka forest. Sita was under the power of the Rakshasas, We know not why Ram did not despise Sita ? People always imitate the doings of the king, henceforth we shall have to forbear all such lapses of our wives. This is what they speak about you in the city and in the village."

Ram was extremely pained by these words and he asked his friends to tell him if that was true or not ? Then all bowed to the ground and said in a body. "O, King ! Nothing of what has been submitted by Bhadra is false."

Ram then dismissed all his friends and courtiers and after deciding in his mind the course of action asked the porter to fetch Lakshman, Bharat and Satrugna without any delay.

The porter then hurried to Lakshman's place and humbly said, "The king wants to see you, please go immediately to him."

In like manner, he informed Bharat and Satrugna about Ram's desire. The three brothers at once started to meet Ram as desired by the latter. On their arrival, the porter informed Ram about their presence. Ram then, with his head cast down in sorrow, asked the porter to bring them in. They are dear to me as my life," said Ram, "and my life depends on them."

Then the princes clad in white apparel entered the central hall and found Ram cast down in sorrow, like the moon in the clutch of the Rahu. He looked like the setting sun, and his eyes like the petals of a lotus full of dew. They grew anxious at that sight and bowed to his feet. Ram stood up with tearful eyes and embracing them said, "My brothers! You are my everything in life. It is your kingdom that I do administer. Now do what I ask you to do."

The princes anxiously waited to hear Ram speak.

Then Ram with a dry countenance observed, "Just hear what the citizens say about Sita, but do not be sorry. Much evil is said about me both in the city and in the country. I have been greatly mortified by that report. You see, I am born in the family of great Ikshwaku, Sita too is born of noble Janak. Lakshman, you know that I have slain Ravan because he abducted Sita from the Dandaka forest. At that time it occurred to my mind that Sita was long imprisoned in Ravan's harem how could I accept her again as my wife? Then Sita for my satisfaction in the presence of all entered into fire as a proof of her purity. Then all the gods and the saints declared her to be absolutely stainless and pure; then Indra offered her to me because she was chaste and pure. I did also know in my heart of hearts that Janaki is chaste and pure. Then I have brought her back to Ayodhya. But this in-

famous report has greatly pained my heart. He lives in hell about whom evil reports are spread. Everybody hates illfame and worships fame. Every noble man aspires after fame. Not to speak of Sita, I can even give up my life for fear of infamy. I have been plunged into an ocean of sorrow for this piece of ignominy. I have not suffered greater pain in the past. So, my brother take Sita tomorrow morning in the chariot driven by Sumantra and leave her in some other country."

"On the other side of the Ganges, stands the sacred hermitage of Valmiki on the back of the Tamasha. Go and leave there Janaki in some secluded place. Keep my words. Don't request me anything about Janaki. Go now, there is no need of discussing good or evil. I shall be greatly offended if you want to dissuade me from this. Swear by my feet, not to speak to me anything about it. I do entreat to consider, that whoever will speak anything about it, will be reckoned by me as my great enemy for standing in the way of my wishes. If you be one with me, keep my request go and abandon Sita in some deserted place, and thereby keep my prestige. Formerly, Sita told me that she wanted to visit the hermitages on the banks of the Ganges, now fulfil that desire."

Saying these, Ram left his brothers and hurriedly entered his room with tearful eyes and panted heavily with a sorrow-stricken heart.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EXILE.

When the night was over, Lakshman, with a dry countenance sorrowfully asked Sumantra to yoke fast horses to the chariot and make a seat within the chariot for Sita.

"According to royal directions, I shall take Sita to the holy hermitages of the Rishis so fetch the chariot soon."

Sumantra in no time got the chariot ready and brought it before Lakshman.

Then Lakshman went to Sita and said, "Worshipful lady! The king has acceded to your request. He has asked me to take you to the hermitages on the bank of the Ganges, and at the royal command I shall soon take you to forest inhabited by the Rishis."

Hearing this, Janaki was mightily pleased and got herself ready for setting out. Taking a lot of precious jewels and costly apparel, Sita said, "I shall distribute these amongst the wives of the Rishis."

Lakshman approved of Sita's proposal and got upon the chariot, and thinking of Ram's direction, he asked the charioteer to drive the chariot fast.

In the meantime, Janaki said, "My boy I see various evil portents on all sides. My right eye is throbbing and my limbs are trembling all over. My mind seems to be uneasy. I feel great anxiety for Ram. The whole world appears almost vapid to me. Is not your brother, Ram, well? Are not mothers-in-law doing well? Has any evil befallen on the people?"

With those words, Janaki with joined hands prayed to gods for their well-being.

Hearing of evil portents, Lakshman with a sorrowful

*Is this not a lie? However great the compulsion might be, it is anything but truth, and does not, in fact, fit in the Lakshman's heroic conduct.

heart, but with a cheerful countenance, said, "O, Worshipful lady ! Everything is all right."

Lakshman then passed the night in a hermitage on the bank of the Gomati. On the following morning, he asked Sumantra to bring the chariot, saying "This day, I shall stand the descent of the Ganges like the Himalayas on the head."

Sumantra got the chariot ready and asked Janaki to get into it. Then Sita mounted the car with Lakshman.

The sacred Ganges was flowing at a short distance. Lakshman after covering a distance of half-a-day's journey, began to cry aloud at the sight of the Ganges.

Seeing Lakshman that stricken with sorrow Janaki asked him most affectionately, "My boy ! Why do you cry arriving at the bank of the Ganges, the object of my desire ? Why do you make me sad in moments of delight ? You do always live near Ram ; do you weep because you could not see him during last two nights ? Ram is dearer to me than life, but, to speak the truth, I have not been cast down with sorrow like you. Don't be so unnerved with sorrow. Help me to cross the Ganges and show me the hermits. I shall spend one night in the hermitage and after distributing the clothes and jewels, shall go back to Ajodhya. My mind too has become restless for the sight of Ram.

Then Lakshman wiped off his tears and called the boatmen before him. Boatmen came and informed him that everything was ready.

Then Lakshman boarded with Janaki a spacious craft brought by the Nishadas. He then asked Sumantra to wait and asked the boatmen to steer on.

At last, they reached the other bank of the Ganges. Lakshman then with tearful eyes and joined palms said, "O Worshipful lady ! My heart is wrung with sorrow. Worthy Ram is wise no doubt, but since he has employed me in this affair, I shall surely be odious to the people. This day, I would prefer death. It is not at all proper for me to have any hand in this ignominious deed. Be good to me. please do not take any offence with me."

With these words, Lakshman fell prostrate on the ground.

Then Janaki seeing Lakshman praying for his death, said, with tears, "My boy! I can't understand anything, just tell frankly what the matter is. Why you are so sad and anxious? Is not the royal master well? Has he requested you for anything for which you so much repent? I command you to tell me everything without any reserve."

Lakshman shedding incessant tears, replied with a downcast look, "O worshipful lady! The king having heard the great scandal that has spread about you both in the city and in the country, has reported only to me. What he has kept secret in his heart I can not possibly disclose that to you. You were proved to be absolutely pure even in my presence, still the king has abandoned you in fear of scandal. Do not think that he suspects you in any way. This is the royal command, and it was your desire too, for these two things I shall leave you in the hermitage. This is the sacred hermitage of Valmiki on the bank of the Ganges. Famous Valmiki was a close friend of my father, King Dasaratha. Live here under his shelter. Pass your days in devotion and chastity, thinking of Rām. Good will betide you at the end."*

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* The desertion of Sita was not an incident in the original epic of Valmiki, but its pathetic tale has so deeply influenced the popular imagination, that most of the readers find it difficult to dismiss it as a pure myth, though the whole of the Uttarakanda, is palpably a later addition, redundant to the epic. This episode of desertion has, of course, enhanced the glory of divine Sita. Perhaps it is the only justification for the existence of the Uttarakanda.

CHAPTER XV.

SITA'S SPEECH.

Sita fainted at these terrible, cruel words of Lakshman. After sometime, when she regained her consciousness, she said with tears, "Lakshman! God has created me for suffering. I have been suffering and meeting with sorrows ever since the beginning of my life. I don't know what great sin I committed in my prior birth, or to whom I caused pangs of separation, that my lord has abandoned me, though I am chaste and devoted to him. Formerly, I could bear all the hardships of a forest-life because Ram was by my side, but how shall I live alone in this asylum? To whom shall I speak my sorrows? What shall I say to the hermits when they will question me, what ignoble act did you commit for which noble Ram has deserted you? O Lakshman! Certainly I would have drowned myself in the Ganges, if Ram's child was not within my womb. Now, do what you have been asked to do. Leave this miserable woman and obey the royal command. But let me tell you a few words, just listen to them. Convey my respects to my mothers-in-law, then after due greetings tell my royal lord that I am thoroughly devoted to him and my character is stainless. I have great respect for him and I know that he has abandoned me in fear of public odium. He is the highest goal of my life and it is my duty to purge him from all stains of ignominy. Tell also the virtuous king that he should look upon his people as he does, with affection as to his brothers. It is his noble duty, and that he should rule justly over the people. I shall not grieve even for a moment even if I lose my life. He should act in the manner by which he may be free from all calumny. Husband to a woman is her highest lord, friend and preceptor. A woman should even sacrifice her insignificant life for the good of the husband. Lakshman! This is all what I have to say. Tell all these to the royal master.

Just mark the symptoms that I am carrying at this moment."*

Lakshman then sorrowfully bowed down at Sita's feet. Lakshman could not utter anything because he lost his power of speech, and cried aloud. Lakshman wheeled round her and after some thought said, "O worshipful lady, what do you say? I have never gazed upon you except on your feet. How can I see you now in the absence of Ram?"

With these words, Lakshman again bowed down to Janaki and got upon his boat. He asked the boatman to steer on and soon crossed the Ganges. On reaching the bank, he got upon the chariot dazed and benumbed with sorrow.

Here Sita was rolling in the dust. Lakshman repeatedly looked at her as he was dragging himself forward. Janaki too repeatedly looked at Lakshman. As soon he was out of sight, Sita was overwhelmed with sorrow and cried aloud in that deep forest, resonant with the pea-cock's cries.

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*Sita is rightly cautious, so that she may not be charged with further calumny.

CHAPTER XVI.

VALMIKI OFFERS PROTECTION.

After sometime, the hermit boys seeing Sita crying in the forest, run to sage Valmiki, and after bowing down at his feet, they said, "O Lord ! An exceedingly beautiful woman is crying in the forest. We have never seen her before. She is beautiful like Goddess Lakshmi. She must be the wife of some notable person. Come and see her. She seems to be a goddess descended from the sky. We saw her weeping bitterly by the side of the river. She does not look like an ordinary woman ; just come and receive her cordially. She is near the hermitage come and protect her."

Virtuous Valmiki could ascertain everything by his yoga, and after deciding what to do, he directed his steps towards Janaki.

On arriving at the bank of the river, Valmiki found Ram's spouse, Janaki, crying bitterly. Valmiki then spoke to her in sweet and gentle words :

"My daughter ! You are daughter-in-law of king Dasarath, dear consort of Ram, and daughter of Janaka. I could ascertain beforehand that you would be coming to this forest. I know the cause of your arrival, and I also know that you are pure and chaste. Be now comforted. You live near me. Hermit-women live at a short distance, they will receive you like their daughter. Banish your fears, accept my hospitality, and live in my asylum. Don't be sorry, think it as your home."

At these words, Janaki bowed at Valmiki's feet. Valmiki then proceeded towards his hermitage and Janaki followed him. Hermit-women seeing Valmiki with Janaki welcomed him with respect and asked what they could do for him. Valmiki said, "This lady is the consort of noble Ram, daughter-in law of King Dasarath and daughter of Janaka. She is of pure character, but she has been deserted by Ram. Now she is under my protection, so for her

own worth and for my request, she is worthy of your respect. Look after her with affection and care."

With those words, Valmiki left Janaki in charge of the hermit-women. Here Lakshman felt greatly pained when Sita entered the hermitage of Valmiki. Lakshman then addressing Sumantra said, "Look, Sumantra! What pain is in store for Ram for abandoning Janaki. What can be more painful to him than deserting a pure, devoted wife? Perhaps it is due to fate. Who in his wrath can destroy the Rakshasas, Gandharvas, is himself ruled by Fate! Formerly, Ram passed nine years in the Dandaka forest and five years in other forests at the wish of father, but this desertion of Janaki in compliance with the wishes of the citizens appears to be more painful. I know not what good will be achieved by yielding to this unjust wishes of the people."

Hearing Lakshman's words, Sumantra said, "O prince! Do not be sorry for Janaki. The Brahmanas long before told your father that Janaki would thus be banished and that Ram would be miserable throughout his life. He would suffer pangs of separation from his dear ones and would forsake you, Bharat and Satrugna. One day, when King Dasarath wanted to know about your future, Maharshi Durvasha, said all these to King Dasarath. At that, the king asked me not to disclose these things to any body else. I ought to obey the king and you would not have heard it, if you were not too eager. Fate is supreme. Though the king forbade me not to disclose, but I have violated his orders. Remove your sorrows. It is due to fate that you are suffering now, but fate is incomprehensible. Don't tell all these to Bharat and Satrugna."

Lakshman after hearing these significant words said, "tell me, Sumantra! What the real truth is."

CHAPTER XVII.

EPISODE OF BHRIGU'S CURSE.

Sumantra said, "O, prince! Formerly, Atri's son Maharshi Durvasha, lived in the hermitage of Vasishtha on account of Chaturmashya penance. At that time, King Dasaratha went to see Vashista. Sage Durvasha was seated by the side of Vashista. Dasaratha respectfully greeted both the Rishis. They welcomed him with things of hospitality. Dasaratha took his seat. It was then mid-day, and they indulged in various kinds of pleasant conversations, in the course of which King Dasaratha asked Durvasha about his own longevity, that of his sons and about the longevity of the sons that might be born of Ram.

Durvasha thereupon said, "O King! Just listen what took place in the war between the Suras and the Asuras. The Daityas being worsted by the Devas sought protection of Bhrigu's wife, which the latter promised to the Daityas. At that, Vishnu was greatly incensed and cut down the head of Bhrigu's wife by his disc. Then Maharshi Bhrigu cursed Vishnu in rage to be born as a man and to suffer the pang of separation from his wife for a definite period. Maharshi Bhrigu became penitent for his curse and thinking that his penance might be vain began to worship Vishnu. Then Vishnu was propitiated and agreed to suffer from Bhrigu's curse. Vishnu for that curse has been born as your son and he is known as Ram. Ram will suffer from the curse of Bhrigu. He will rule for a long time in Ayodhya, people will be happy for serving him and he will go to the Brahmaloaka after ten thousand and ten hundred years. He will perform many Aswamedha sacrifices at great cost and two sons will be born unto him of Janaki. This is what sage Durvasha told King Dasaratha about Ram. I have heard this, and Vasishtha kept it so long as secret. Now, don't be sorry for Sita and Ram."

Lakshman was greatly relieved* by Sumantra's words and praised him much. They then passed the night on the bank of the Keshi river, on the following morning, Lakshman resumed his journey and arrived at Ayodhya.

Lakshman with a cast down look entered the palace-gate. On entering, he found Ram scated and shedding incessant tears. He bowed at Ram's feet and said, "I have left pure Janaki at the hermitage of Valmiki O worshipful lord! Be not overwhelmed with sorrow, it is due to evil time. A wise man like you never laments for loss. You see all savings end in loss, all rises in fall, all compositions, into decompositions, and life into death. Hence a man should not be too much addicted to his wife, children, or friends and relations, or to wealth, for their loss is inevitable. It is quite easy for you to control your mind and banish sorrow from your heart. A man like you is never moved by all these things. If you lament Janaki's loss in this manner, then the scandal, for fear of which you have banished, Janaki will again be uppermost in the city. Be patient and banish your weakness.

Then Ram with great satisfaction said, "What you say is true, henceforth I shall devote myself to the work of administration. All my sorrows have vanished. I have understood everything by your pleasant words."

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*In the original is delighted.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RAM AS A STORY-TELLER

Ram then said to Lakshman, you are intelligent and there is none more friendly to me than you. Do what I now ask to do. For the last four days, I have not done any royal duty, so call now the ministers, the priests and all the people who have business with me. The king who does not daily look after the administration, is doomed to hell. It is said that there was a king named Nriga, once he gave millions of cows with their calves to the Brahmins. Amongst those there was a cow that belonged to a Sagnika Brahmin. That Brahmin after a long search found out his cow in the possession of a Brahmin at Kanakhal. Then a dispute broke out over the cow between the two Brahmins. Both then came to Nriga for decision, but King Nriga could not be found. When after waiting for many days they got the sight of the king, the Brahmins in anger cursed him to be transformed into a lizard and to live unseen in a hole. When Visnu would be born as Vasudeva in the line of Yadu, he would redeem the king from the curse. Now that King Nriga is suffering from that terrible curse. In truth, quarrels occur on account of injustice of the king. Let all people come to me."

Lakshman then asked about the fate of Nriga. Ram said that Nriga got his son Vasu installed on the throne, dug three holes to live comfortable in summer, winter and rains. Nriga then entered the hole.

Ram said that he had narrated the story of Nriga and if Lakshman desired he might entertain the latter with other stories like that.

Lakshman said, "O worshipful lord! The more I hear such wonderful stories, the more curious I grow."

Thereupon, Ram began the story of Nimi. Nimi was the twelfth son of Ikshwaku. Nimi performed a great sacrifice and asked Vashista to officiate as a priest. But as Vashista was engaged in performing a sacrifice of Indra, he

asked Nimi to wait. But without waiting, Nimi asked Gautama to officiate as a priest. Vashista on seeing Gautama acting as a priest was greatly incensed and asked for an interview with the king. Vashista cursed Nimi with death, and Nimi too uttered the same curse against Vashista.

Lakshman asked how Nimi and Vasista after death could live in their bodies again ?

Vashista then approached Brahma for getting back a corporal body. Brahma then asked Vashista to enter the energy left by Mitra and Varnn.

Then Vashista speedily repaired to the ocean. At that time, Varun and Mitra were living together. At that time, beautiful nymph Urvashi came to them. Varun at her sight was smitten with love and asked for her company. Urvashi said that Mitra had first asked for that. Then Varun was smitten with love and said, "O, beauty ! I shall then cast my seminal fluid, discharged at your sight, into that pitcher made by the gods. If you do not allow me to join, I shall relieve myself in this way."*

Urvashi was greatly pleased with Varuna's words and said that though her body belonged to Mitra, but her heart belonged to him. After that Varuna emitted his fire-like energy into the pitcher. Then Urvashi appeared before Mitra. Mitra was greatly angry at this conduct of Urvashi and he cursed her by which she was to live for some time on earth. She would then be a spouse to Pururava. Pururava was the son of Budh, the king of Kashi. Pururava's son was Ayu and Ayu's son was Nahush who ruled in heaven for a long time when Indra became exhausted in his war against Vritra.

Two Rishis were born of the germinal seed cast by Varun and Mitra into the pitcher. First Agastya rose from that pitcher, and as he issued from the jar he said to Mitra, "I am your only begotten son." Saying this he went away. Before Varun cast his seminal fluid into the jar, that contained the seminal fluid of Mitra. After some

* Is this the way in which Ram should speak to Lakshman ?

time from that admixture of Varun's and Mitra's energy, the spirited priest of the Ikshaku line, Maharshi Vasista was born. I have related you the story of Vasista, now I shall speak about Nimi."

"Seeing Nimi dead, the Rishis did not refrain from the sacrifice. They decorated Nimi's body with garlands, covered it with cloth and placed it in an oil-can. After the sacrifice was over Maharshi Bhrigu restored him to life. At that even the gods were pleased and they said, "O king! Ask for any blessing, and tell us where shall we keep your bodily soul (Jivatma); Then Nimi's soul replied "O gods! I shall live in the eyes of all creatures."

The gods agreed and said "you will visit every eye in the form of air. And from this time there will be winks in eyes."

Then the gods departed. After that, the Rishis for the birth of Nimi's son began to rub Nimi's body like a piece of fire drilling wood, and from that Mithi was born from Janan.* Janaka is his another name and as he was born of a dead body he is known as Vaideha."

Lakshman then questioned Ram why Nimi while engaged in a sacrifice, did not forgive Vasista! Ram then said that every body had not the same power of forbearance and he illustrated his remarks by narrating the story of king Yayati who had two wives Sarmistha and Devayani. Puru was born of Sarmistha and Yadu of Devayani. Yayati was more devoted to Sarmistha. At that Devayani summoned her father Maharshi Bhargava who cursed Yayati with perpetual old age.

Yayati then being inflicted with old age, asked his son Yadu to take over his infirmities of old age. Thereupon, Yadu said that Puru was his dear son, let him take over the infirmities of old age. Yayati then asked Puru to take over his old age. Thereupon, Puru said, "I consider myself blessed to-day, I shall obey your commands."

After a long time Yayati asked Puru to return his old age to him. Yayati then gladly took back his old age, and cursed Yadu that since he was disobedient grim Rakshasas

* Janan—means to grow to be born.

would be born of him in the Kraunchavan. Then Puru was installed on the thorne in the city of Pratisthan.*

CHAPTER XIX.

LAVANASURA.

One day, as Ram sat upon his throne Sumantra came and informed that some hermits headed by Chyavan Rishi living on the banks had came to see him. Ram asked to bring them without delay. The hermits presented Ram fruits and roots and picthers full of holy waters collected from the places of pilgrimage. Ram after showing them due respect, asked why they had come to him, and he was ever ready to carry out their wishes. The hermits expressed their great satisfaction at these words of Ram. They then asked Ram to rescue them from great fear.

Thereupon, Ram asked them to banish their fear and to tell him what he could do for them. Sage Chyavan then said, "In the golden age there was a highly pious Daitya named Madhu—son of Lola. God Rudra was greatly pleased with his devotion and presented to him a formidable lance. Madhu then prayed that his descendants too might possess that victorious lance. At that Rudra said that, that prayer could not be granted, but it, with all its

* Again three interpolated episodes occur. In the first two episodes a dog came to Ram, preached him some homilies about religion and royal duties. In the third episode, Uluk came to Ram and told him something about royal duties and asked him to decide a dispute concerning a house between Uluk and a Vulture. Ram decided in favour of Uluk.

efficacy, would remain with his son. That Madhu's son is Lavanasur and his mother is Kumbhanashi. At the time of death Madhu gave that divine lance to Lavanasur. That cruel Lavanasur has grown quite formidable and is tyrannising over the whole world, specially over the hermits. Now, you have destroyed Ravan with his brood, please save us from the hands of Lavanasur."

Ram assured the hermits to remove their anxiety and enquired as to the residence of Lavanasur. The Rishis replied that Lavanasur resided in Madhuvan.

Ram said, "Remove your fears I shall surely kill that Rakshasa. No my brothers to whom I shall allot the task of slaying that demon, to myself, to Bharat or to Shatrughna?"

Thereupon, Bharat expressed his readiness for the task. At that Shatrughna said that during Ram's exile Bharat had suffered much hardship, so he must go for the destruction of Lavanasur. Then Ram said, "Let it be so. I shall crown you as the king of Madhuvan."

At that Shatrughna fell deeply ashamed and said, "My Lord! It is improper to crown the younger brother when the elder one is living, but your words can not be vain, I must carry out your wishes I have done wrong in protesting against Bharat's proposal for destroying Lavanasur, but my evil star prompted me to protest. It is not proper for the younger brother to oppose the elder brother's words."

Ram was greatly pleased with Shatrughna's words and asked Bharat and Lakshman to make arrangements for the coronation ceremony. Then due preparations were made for Shatrughna's coronation to the kingdom of Madhuvan. When Shatrughna was invested with crown, he shone like the glittering Sun. The Rishis were greatly assured by that sight.

Ram then told Shatrughna that Lavanasur at the time of collecting his food, kept the lance in his house and he took that with him only when some one challenged him to a battle. Shatrughna should prevent with arms Lavanasura's entrance into the house and then challenged him to a battle.

Ram then told Shatrughna, "Take four thousand horses, two thousand chariots and one thousand infantry with you. Let merchants follow you with their merchandise. Let actors and dancers also accompany you. Take ten lakhs of gold coins to pay the army. Keep the troops always contented by money and kind words, see they do not become defiant in any way. What can be achieved by a well-contented army can not be done by money, wife or friends. Proceed in such a manner so that Lavan can not understand your motive. There is no other way of destroying him than to intercept his way when he is unarmed, otherwise when he meets one for fight, the latter's death is sure."

Shatrughna then despatched his army against Lavan after waiting for a month in Ayodhya, he set out for Lavan. Shatrughna passed two nights in his way, and on the third day he reached the sacred hermitage of Valmiki.

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CHAPTER XX.

THE BIRTH OF KUSHA AND LAVA.

Shatrughna after greeting sage Valmiki said that he had come there for Ram's work, he would pass there a night and on the following day would start for the west. Sage Valmiki said that his hermitage in fact belonged to the Raghus, so he should feel himself at home. In former times, there was a king named Sudhasa, Virjyasaba was his son. One day, in the course of his hunting, he found two grim Rakshasas in the form of two tigers were destroying the deer. He killed one of them the other then threatened him with injury in future. Sometime after, Sudasha performed an Aswamedha sacrifice. After the sacrifice was over, the Rakshasa assumed the form of Vashista and

asked the king to entertain him with meat diet. The king, thereupon, asked two cooks to prepare meat for him. In the meantime, the Rakshasa, in the guise of a cook, cooked human flesh and then served that meat to Sudasha, queen Madayanti and to Sage Vashista. Vashista after tasting it found to be human flesh and cursed Sudasha to feed upon human flesh for serving him with it. King Sudasha too was about to curse, when queen Madayanti interfered and forbade Sudasha not to curse a sage like Vashista. Sudasha's feet grew dark for anger and from that time he came to be known as Kalmashpada. Sudasha and his queen bowed to Vashista who said that the king would be absolved from the curse after twelve years. After twelve years, Sudasha again ruled over kingdom. The sacred sacrificial ground of Sudasha was close to Valmiki's hermitage.

The night Shatrughna was in Valmiki's hermitage, Janaki delivered two sons. It was then midnight, The hermit-boys informed Valmiki of the birth of Janaki's sons. Valmiki at that news came and found the two babies beautiful like the moon. Valmiki then performed some rites with Kusha grass that were calculated to remove all ghosts and Rakshasas for the safety of those babies. Valmiki then asked some elderly people to rub the body of the first-born of the twin with ends of the Kusha grass, and to rub the younger one with the lower end of the Kusha grass. For this, the elder boy became known as Kusha and the younger one as Lava,* which means the lower end. "These twin boys," declared Valmiki, "will be known in the names bestowed by me as Kushi and Lava." Shatrughna even in the midnight could overhear everything and he was glad to hear that sons were born to Ram. In the morning, Shatrughna set out for Lavan, and after seven day's journey, he arrived at the sacred hermitage of Chyavan and of other hermits on the bank of the Jamuna.

* Lava means the lower end.

CHAPTER XXI.

DESTRUCTION OF LAVAN.

At night, Shatrughna asked hermit Chyavan about the prowess of Lavan. Chyavan said that formerly there was a powerful king in the Ikshwaku line named Mandhata. He made preparations for the conquest of three worlds and that frightened the gods and Indra.

Indra then approached Mandhata and said that he should first reduce the whole earth into submission and then should think of conquering the heaven. Then Mandhata asked Indra to tell him who on earth had not yet been brought under his subjection? Indra then mentioned Lavan, Madhu's son, residing in Madhuvan. Mandhata then in great wrath set out against Lavan. Mandhata sent his envoy to Lavan, but Lavan in anger ate his emissary. Mandhata then incensed with anger challenged Lavan to a fight. Lavan issued forth with his dreadful lance and hurled it against Mandhata. It at once destroyed Mandhata and returned to Lavan's hand. The Rishi then advised Shatrughna to kill Lavana when the latter would be out in search of his food.

Early in the morning, Lavan set out in search of his food; in the meantime Shatrughna crossed the Jamuna and seized the entrance of Madhuvan.

At mid-day, Lavan returned with heaps of carcasses of different animals and found Shatrughna standing at the gate. Lavana laughed at his audacity and said that all his arms would be of no avail against him; and Lavan thanked Shatrughna for arriving at his hour of meal.

Shatrughna in anger challenged him to a duel and declared that he was Shatrughna the younger brother of heroic Ram and noble Bharat. Thereupon, Lavana burst out in a loud laugh saying Ravan was the brother of his maternal aunt Surpanakha, but he had excused Ram from contempt, because Ram and his host were not worth his challenge. After thus a short exchange of heated words

between Lavan and Shatrughna, a severe struggle ensued between the two, and Lavan struck Shatrughna with a huge tree on his head. Shatrughna fainted and Lavan then took up the dead animals on his shoulders which he had kept on the ground at the time of scuffle, and thinking Shatrughna to be dead advanced towards the gate. But in no time Shatrughna stood upon his legs and opposed Lavana with arms against his ingress into the house, and took up an irresistible shaft for the destruction of Lavan. Even the gods were frightened by the sight of that formidable arrow and approached Brahma, the Grand sire of creation. Brahma then said that with this shaft Vishnu formerly destroyed Madhu and Kaitabha. Ram had given that to Shatrughna knowing full well its consequence, hence they should remove their fears and should go and witness with their own eyes the destruction of Lavan. The gods then departed. They saw the dreadful arrow burning in Shatrughna's hand. Shatrughna stretched his bow and sent it flying towards Lavana. It at once pierced Lavana's heart and Lavana fell dead on the ground.

Shatrughna then shone like the sun free from the clouds. The gods and saints praised Shatrughna for his great victory.

Shatrughna then settled in Madhuban. He built there a magnificent city and lived with his army and followers. Madhuban soon grew into a prosperous city. After twelve years Shatrughna came back to Ayodhya leaving his men in Madhuban.

CHAPTER XXII.

SHATRUGHNA'S RETURN

After passing eight inns, Shatrughna arrived at the hermitage of Valmiki. Valmiki received him cordially, and offered him hospitality. Valmiki complimented Shatrughna for destroying Lavana, who had killed many kings with their armies. Then Sage Valmiki sniffed Shtrughna's head as a mark of affection.

The Rishi had composed Ram Charita. After dinner Shatrughna listened to that minstrel. That song was sung in accompaniment of harp, and distinctly pronounced sounds issued from the lungs, gullet and palate. The song was composed in refined Sanskrit in due meters and had all the characteristics of a song. Its every expression was true, and it faithfully described every incident that had occurred before. There was no perversion of truth at any place. Tears bedimmed Shatrughna's eyes. He began to heave windy sighs, and the events narrated in the song were past, but they seemed to occur again before his eyes. Even his troops that accompanied him admired the song. They talked amongst themselves, "How wonderful it is ! Is it a dream ? What we have witnessed in the past is now being rehearsed in the hermitage." They then requested Shatrughna to ask Valmiki who was the composer of that song ?

Shatrughna said, "My soldiers ! It is not proper to question Valmiki about it. Many such wonderful things happen in Valmiki's hermitage we should not be over-curious about anything."

With these words Shatrughna retired to his allotted hut for rest. Shatrughna could not sleep that night ; he continued to think about the sweet lyrics he had heard. In the morning, Shatrughna took Valmiki's leave and started for Ayodhya.

On entering the palace, Shatrughna found Ram seated like a second Indra surrounded by his councillors. After

bowing down to Ram, Shatrughna said that he had carried out Ram's command. Wicked Lavana had been slain and Madhupuri had turned into a populous city. But he was sorry for living far from Ram for these twelve years so he asked Ram's permission to live in Ayodhya and not to leave him in future. Thereupon, Ram embraced Shatrughna and asked him not to be sorry for this. Ram said, 'It is not proper for a Kshatriya to lament like this. A Kshatriya never feels sorry to live in a foreign land. It is the duty of a Kshatriya to rule his subjects properly. You will have to go back to your kingdom, but you may come to Ayodhya occasionally to see me. You are dearer to me than life, live with me for seven nights and then return with your men to Madhupuri.'

Shatrughna with a sorrowful heart acceded to Ram's proposal. He lived in Ayodhya for seven nights, then started for Madhupur, after greeting Ram, Lakshman and Bharat. Bharat and Lakshman followed Shatrughna on foot to some distance.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE DEATH OF A BRAHMIN LAD.

One day, an old Brahmin arrived at the palace-gate with dead child in his lap. The Brahmin was bitterly wailing the death of his son. The Brahmin was saying, 'Ah, what wicked deeds I committed in my former birth? For what sin I have lost you, my son? Oh, my darling! You were a tender boy, not yet arrived at puberty. You were only fifteen. Where have you flitted away, by leaving me behind? Both myself and your poor mother will die for you in a short time. I do not remember to

have ever spoken any falsehood, or to have hurt any body, or to do any injury to any one. For what misdeed, my son, without performing the funeral rites of his father, has fallen a victim to death? I have never seen, nor ever heard that one dies untimely during Ram's rule. When the boy died surely there is some great sin in Ram's rule. In another's rule, such things would never happen O, Ram! the boy is dead, restore him to life, or I shall with my wife die before you. Live long then happily with your brothers being guilty of killing a Brahmin. So long we lived happily, but we are now subject to death. When the boy died, surely the kingdom of the great Ikshwaku is without ruler. People suffer on account of an inefficient king, and when the king is characterless, people die untimely; or it might be, that people of the city and the country have been greatly addicted to vice, and their crimes are not duly punished. This is certainly a fault of the king, and my son has died for that fault of the king."

The Brahmin thus repeatedly accused Ram and waited at the gate of the palace with his dead boy in his lap.

Ram heard this bitter lament of the Brahmin. With sorrowful heart he summoned his brothers, councillors, Vashista, Vamdeva and the citizens.

At his call, with Vashista came Markandeya, Madgulya, Vamdeva, Kashyapa, Katyana, Javali, Gautama and Narada. They blessed Ram and took their seats. Ram greeted them respectfully, received the courtiers courteously. When every one took his seat, Ram sorrowfully began, "A Brahmin is waiting at the royal gate with a dead child in his lap. Tell me why this boy has died so untimely? Thereupon, Narada said, "Just listen to the cause of the boy's death and then decide your duty. "In the Golden Age, only the Brahmins were given to meditation and penance. Besides them, other castes were not entitled to that. At that time, there was no untimely death. After Satya, or the Golden Age came the Silver Age; at that time, people's faith in Brahma was shaken a bit and for that vanity of self the Kshatriyas were born. In the Satyayuga, only the Brahmins observed penance, but in the Tretayuga, it became common with

the Kshatriyas. In the Satya Yuga, the Brahmins were superior to the Kshatriyas in meditation, but in the Treta both were equal in Tapasya. Manu and other Rishis finding no difference between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas made shastras for the four castes. In that age there was hardly any obstacle to the cultivation of virtue. At that time, only a quarter of the full measure of sin existed on earth. In the Golden Age, Krishi agriculture was an admonition, in the Silver Age, impiety appeared in the form of the agriculture. In the Golden Age, people lived on fruits and roots that were obtained without any labour. For the existence of sin* in the form of cultivation, the longevity of the people became shortened then that of sacrifices and of other religious rites reaped virtue. In the Satya and the Treta Yugas, the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas were devoted to penance, other castes served them. Of the four castes, the Vaisyas and the Sudras served the other two castes, but when the Vaisyas took to agriculture, the duty of serving the other three castes fell upon the Sudras. At that time, two parts of sin possessed the world. It was then Dapar Age.† And the Vaisyas gradually took to Tapasya. But later on, the low Sudras will be greatly devoted to Tapasya, but that will be in the Kali Yuga. It is highly sinful for a Sudra to devote to penance and meditation in the Dapar Age; that

* In Political Economy introduction of agriculture marks an epoch in the primitive civilisation of mankind, but this progress has been condemned from what standard of virtue, only God can say; though, ofcourse, in the Bible, God cursed Adam to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow for tasting the fruit of Knowledge. It is the fondness of popular imagination to place the age of human felicity in the past, but both history and science contradict it at every step.

† Remember, the Ramayan deals with a story of the Treta Yuga, but the composer of this episode who is more of a begot than a poet (certainly, it can not be called poetry in any sense) being overcarried by his theological (mistaken for religious) zeal he forgets, that he is too much anticipating the future, by transgressing the

Sudra is practising penance under your rule, hence the Brahmin boy died so untimely. The king during whose rule misdeeds are committed, both the miscreants and the king are doomed to perdition. The king who rules justly gets one sixth of the virtuous merits of the people. Hence, find out all the misdeeds in your kingdom and try to punish them. If you act in this way, then your virtuous merits will be enhanced, people's longevity will be increased and the Brahmin boy will regain his life.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SAMVUKA'S PUNISHMENT

Ram was greatly delighted with Narad's words, and told Lakshman. "My boy ! Go and give hopeful assurance to the Brahmin and preserve the body of the Brahmin lad in an oil-vat. See that the boy does not become decomposed in any way."

Ram then thought of the Puspaka, and the Puspaka at once appeared before him. Ram then assigning the duty of the protection of the city to Bharat, Lakshman and Shatrughna set out towards the West. But he found no trace of impiety in that quarter. Then he started for the North bounded by the Himalayas and thence towards the East. Then he arrived at the South, there he found on the north of the Saivala mountain an ascetic practising hard penance. He was dangling from

limits of time so freely. It is too late to question the logic of such pious arguments, with none but one of the author's school will find to be rational.—Translator,

a tree with head downwards, on the bank of a spacious tank.

Ram accosting him said, "You are indeed blessed. Tell me in which caste you have been born. I am Ram son of Dasarath. Out of curiosity, I have asked you this question. Tell me the truth whether you are a Brahmin, Kshatriya, or a Sudra?"

The ascetic replied, "O king! I am born of Sudra caste. I want to attain divinity by such penance. When I want to attain divinity I won't tell lies. I am a Sudra by caste, and my name is Samvuka."

As soon as the ascetic uttered those words, Ram drew forth his sword and severed Samvuka's head.*

As soon Sudra Samvuka was slain the gods uttered praise of Ram. Flowers were rained from above, and the gods told Ram to ask for boon.

Ram, thereupon, said that they were pleased with him, then they would restore the Brahmin boy to life. Ram was pledged to the Brahmin for the revival of his son.

The gods then assured Ram that the Brahmin lad had already revived the moment the Sudra ascetic was killed. The gods then informed Ram that they would then go to sage Agastya. Agastya had been living in water for the last twelve years, the time for the comple-

* Ram had long lost his divinity form the Kiskindhya Kanda, and the more the epic, advanced the worse he fared. In this connection, one word is necessary. The regional poets dealing with the Ramayan have exercised far greater influence upon the public mind than the original Sanskrit poem. In upper India, amongst the Hindi speaking population the Ramayan means the Ramayan of Tulshidas, who recast the whole story in his own way and has extolled Ram into Supreme God-head. It is a devotional lyric, and in it Hanuman is the picture of a great devotee.

In Bengal, the Bengali epic of Krittivash has suppressed the original altogether. Here too, the poet has freely dealt

tion of his penance had arrived. They then requested Ram to accompany them to Agastya's place. Ram agreed to their proposal and followed the gods in his Puspaka chariot.

CHAPTER XXV.

SAGE AGASTYA'S EPISODE.

Ram got down from the Puspaka and bowed at Agastya's feet. Sage Agastya was effulgent with divine energy. Agastya by receiving him with warm hospitality said that he was his honoured guest for his great virtues and he had already heard from the gods about Sambuka's fate and the restoration of his Brahmin lad to life. He then asked Ram to accept some ornaments made by the heavenly architect Viswakarma. Ram refused them saying that only the Brahmins could accept a gift and a Kshatriya should not.

Agastya then related that in the Satya Yuga there was no king. The people one day approached Brahma and asked for a ruler. Thereupon, Brahma called upon the principal gods—the rulers of different regions—give a portion of their energy. At that time Brahma sneezed. A king was born of that sneezing. Sneezing was called Kshupa, hence the king was named Kshupa. Brahma then imparted to Kshupa the spirit of Indra for the occupation of the earth. Varun's spirit for the maintenance of the body, Kuvera's spirit for the possession of wealth and that of Yama for the chastisement of the people. Ram should, therefore, accept the ornaments in the spirit of Indra. Ram, thereupon, accepted the

with the story and has introduced many things in the poem. In Krittivasha's poem the influence of the popular creed is more than evident.

gift of Agastya and asked whence the sage had got them. Agastya said that in the Treta Yuga there was an extensive forest and Agastya practised penance in that. Once out of curiosity Agastya entered that forest and inside the dense forest saw a beautiful hermitage. But that hermitage was empty. Agastya passed the night there, but in the morning found a dead body lying on the ground. He was struck by the beauty of the dead body. When Agastya was thinking about that strange corpse, suddenly a chariot descended from the sky. An effulgent man was seated in that and fairies and nymphs were singing and dancing around him. That man got down from his chariot and fed upon the dead body. Agastya then enquired why that man took that abominable flesh of a dead body. The man then replied that his father was famous Sudeva. He had two wives and two sons were born of them. He was Sweta and his elder brother was Suratha. After Sudeva's death, the citizens made him their king. After thinking that his end was nigh, Sweta repaired to the forest by installing Snratha on the throne. He then passed three thousand years in penance. "I then reached Brahmaloaka," said Sweta, "But was greatly oppressed by hunger and thirst." He then asked Brahma why he was suffering thus, when people in the Brahmaloaka are free from them. Brahma then said that human flesh would be his meat, that he had so long only practised penance, but made no charities hence he suffered from hunger and thirst even in the Brahmaloaka. That henceforth he would feed upon dead bodies and when Agastya would come he would be absolved from this curse. He then prayed to Agastya to save him and to accept those ornaments. That was how Agastya came to possess those ornaments.

Ram then enquired why the place where Sweta practised penance was devoid of all beasts and birds?

Thereupon, Agastya said that in the Golden Age there was a great king named Manu the founder of the caste-system and of their respective duties. His son was Ikshwaku who was the founder of royal dynasties.

After Manu, Ikshwaku became king and he had hundred

sons. Of his sons the youngest was dull and he never obeyed his elder brothers. Ikshwaku named that son as Danda. That Danda founded a kingdom between the Vindhya and the Saivala. He founded a beautiful city named Madhumanta and appointed sage Shukra as his priest.

After a long rule, one day, Danda went to the hermitage of Shukra and saw Shukra's beautiful daughter loitering alone. Danda was at once smitten with love and he forcibly embraced her. Danda then outraged her and returned to his city.

Shukra's daughter Arāja then in tears went towards her father's hermitage. Shukra soon got information from the mouth of a pupil. Shukra's wrath was kindled and uttered the awful curse that Indra would devastate Danda's kingdom and all living beings in that kingdom would die. For seven nights the clouds would rain dusts over the place and everything would be buried under it. He then asked the people of the hermitage to leave the forest. Shukra then asked Arāja to live in Shmadhi. Shukra's words were realised in time. From that time, Danda's kingdom had come to be known as the Dandaka forest.

Ram passed the night in Agastya's hermitage and on the following morning he left for Ayodhya with Agastya's permission. Ram then reached Ayodhya in mid-day and sent information to Bharat and Lakshman.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE ASWAMEDHA SACRIFICE.

Ram on return to Ayodhya, expressed his wish for the performance of a Rajsuya sacrifice.

At that proposal, Bharat said all the kings looked upon Ram as their father. So he must not do anything by which the kings might suffer. Those kings were obedient to Ram, so he must not ruin them. Ram gladly agreed to Bharat's proposal and said that for Bharat's words he had refrained from that sacrifice.

Lakshman then advised Ram to perform the Aswamedha Sacrifice, the destroyer of all sins.

Lakshman then related how once there was great friendship between the Gods and the Asuras, and how Vritra became formidable by his penance. The gods then approached Vishnu for the suppression of Vritra. Vishnu told them that Indra would be able to destroy Vritra by his thunder. After the destruction of Vritra, Indra grew anxious, for he had committed a great sin by killing Vritra. According to Vishnu's advice, Indra performed Aswamedha Sacrifice and was absolved from sin. After the sacrifice, the Sin of killing a Brahman appeared in person of a woman before the gods who asked her to divide herself into four parts. She did so, and said that one part would live in the rivers for four months during the rains ; another would live for ever in barren lands ; the third part would live for three days in young women ;* and the fourth part would, exist in them who would, for nothing, scandalise, or kill Brahmins. The gods agreed to her words and Indra became absolved from sin. Aswamedha was of such efficacy !

Ram said that he had heard the story of Vritra and began to narrate the story of Ila. There was a virtuous

*It refers to the menstrual period of women that last for three nights.

king named Ila, he was the lord of the world. One day, he went on hunting. In the course of his hunting, he entered the forest where Kartika was born. There, God Sankara was sporting in amorous dalliance with Parvati. There Sankara turned all male creatures into females. As soon as Ila entered that spot he and his men were at once turned into women. Ila learnt from Sankara's words that, that transformation could not be changed. Ila then prayed to Parvati. Parvati then granted Ila's prayer in halves, saying that Ila would remain one month as a man and the next month as a woman, and that when as a man he would not remember the state of a woman, and when a woman would not remember that of a man.

In the course of Ila's change as woman, Ila saw Maharshi Budha, son of Soma. Ila was greatly captivated by his beauty and Budha too was highly infatuated by Ila's beauty. But Budha soon learnt the true state of things by Yoga and changed female companions of Ila into Kimpurusha women, and they would get Kimpurusha men as their husbands. Budha began to enjoy with Ila. After a month Ila rose from sleep as a man and found Budha engaged in penance and enquired the sage about his followers. Budha finding Ila ignorant of everything, told him that his followers had been destroyed by hail storm. Ila became greatly sorry at these words, and asked Budha's permission to return to his kingdom. But Budha asked Ila to remain there. In course of time, Ila in union with Budha, gave birth to a son; the name of that son was Pururava.

When Ila again regained his manhood, Budha called some sages to decide what was good for Ila—the son of Prajapati Kardama. The sages decided that nothing could be done without propitiating Sankara. God Rudra was very fond of the Aswamedha sacrifice and they decided to perform that sacrifice. Rudra was greatly pleased at the performance of the Aswamedha sacrifice in his honour and granted manhood to Ila.

Ram then asked Laksman to call Vashista, Vamdeva, Javali and Kashyapa, well experienced in the performance of the Aswamedha sacrifice.

When those sages came, Ram expressed his desire for the performance of an Aswamedha sacrifice. The sages bowed to Rudra and spoke highly about the merits of the Aswamedha.

Finding the sages approving his proposal, Ram asked Lakshman to send invitation to Sugriva, Vibhishan and to all the kings who were friendly to him.

Ram also asked Lakshman to make all necessary arrangements for the sacrifice "Let all join the sacrifice," said Ram.

Bharat then set out with gold and silver coins for collecting all necessary articles for the sacrifice. Ram asked Bharat to fetch a golden statue of Sita for being initiated in the sacrifice.

Thereupon, Bharat and Shatrughna made all necessary arrangements for the sacrifice, and a general proclamation for a great public festivity was given.

CHAPTER XXVII.

VALMIKI AND THE SACRIFICE.

Then, at Ram's command, a black buck and a beautiful horse were let loose. Lakshman with the Ritwikas were engaged in protecting the same. After setting the horse free, Ram with his army repaired to Naimish Kshetra to witness the wonderful sacrifice.

Kings and princes began to pour in from various quarters. Bharat and Shatrughna were entrusted with the duties of receiving them. Sugriva and other Vanaras looked after their entertainments. Vibhishan and the

Rakshasas looked after the hermits and the Rishis. Costly and beautiful camps were pitched for the kings and their followers. With great pomp and splendour Ram's Aswamedha sacrifice began. In the sacrificial ground, the royal order was ever repeated to give liberally till the needy were satisfied; and before one did ask for anything, the Vanaras and the Rakshasas repleted him with sweets. In truth, in Ram's sacrifice none could be found who appeared to be sad, dejected or dirty. Everybody looked quite hale and hearty. The monks and the Rishis declared that they had never seen such a great sacrifice before, and nowhere charities on such an extensive scale were seen. He who wanted gold got it; he who wanted gems got them. In the sacrificial ground, money and clothes were kept in mountainlike huge piles. Thus for about a year, the great sacrifice continued. Here again, the horse followed by Lakshman, began to roam about at his will.

In that sacrifice, Sage Valmiki came with his disciples and fixed his quarter in the place where the Rishis, were putting up. Valmiki called his dear pupils, Kushi, Lava, and told them to sing the whole of the Ramayan before Kings, Rishis, and Brahmins in the place of sacrifice. Valmiki gave them some fruits and roots saying that they would never feel exhausted, nor their voice would in any time be hoarse if they would partake them. Valmiki said, "If royal Ram be present amongst the Rishis, and if he summons you to him, then sing to him, the whole of the Ramayan in the manner I have taught you to recite and to sing. Don't be too much greedy about money. Of what use is money to them who live in huts and feed upon fruits and roots? If Ram asks you whose sons you are, then tell him that you are my pupils. You see, king, in a sense, is father to all, so do not slight his words, but sing it beginning from the Adi Kanda. Your lyres are in order, and sing the song to-morrow cheerfully in accompaniment of the Vina."

Valmiki then lapsed into silence, and Kushi, Lava bowed to his words.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SONG.

When the night was over, Kushi, Lava after taking their bath began to sing according to Valmiki's direction. Ram was greatly charmed by their songs. He grew highly curious about them and called the princes, the Rishis, the learned, the aged, the Brahmins, the musicians, the painters, the grammarians, the dramatists, the logicians, the astrologers, the astronomers, and men versed in the Vedas and the Purans to listen to that song. That song was wonderful and exceedingly sweet, and the delight of the audience grew more and more keen, as they listened more and more to the song. They did not feel in any way statiated and repeatedly stared at those two boys. It seemed as if they were drinking them with their eyes. They said that those two boys looked like Ram.

The boys sang twenty cantos from the beginning. Ram was highly pleased with their song and asked his brothers to pay eighteen thousand Nishkas to the boys. But Kushi, Lava refused to accept such a huge sum. Ram was greatly surprised at that; they said that they were denizens of forest, lived upon fruits and roots, money was of little use to them.

Ram then enquired about the author of that wonderful song, and how long it was. The boys answered that worshipful Valmiki was the author of that poem. It consisted of twenty-four thousand slokas and one hundred legends. There were five hundred cantos and six Kandas from the beginning and the Uttarakanda too had been added* And it dealt with the events of Ram's life.

Ram heard the song for several days together, and in the course of it, came to know that Kushi, Lava were his sons born of Sita. Ram then sent envoys to Valmiki to tell

* This conclusively proves that the Uttarakanda is a later interpolation.

him, that if Sita was chaste and pure she might come and absolve Ram from all shame. Thereupon, Valmiki agreed to Ram's proposal.

Then Ram told the princes and the Rishis to come on the following morning to witness the purification of Sita. All praised Ram for his decision.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE PURIFICATION.

When the night was over, Ram appeared at the sacrificial ground. All waited in anxious breath to witness the purification of Janaki.

In the meantime, Valmiki entered the crowded place, Janaki followed him with tearful eyes thinking of Ram in her heart. Every one was moved with sorrow by that sight. Then Sage Valmiki addressing Ram said, "O King! Here is your devoted wife, Sita, whom you banished in fear of public odium. Permit her to prove herself pure. These twin boys Kushi, Lava are your own sons born of Janaki. I have never told any lie. Believe me. If there be any stain on Janaki's character, let all my religious merits be destroyed for that. I tell you by my spiritual vision, that Janaki is pure, and you banished her from fear of a scandal."

Ram then said with joined palms, "O worshipful Master! I take Janaki as chaste and pure on your words, but let her prove herself so. I know her to be pure, but have abandoned her from fear of slander. Save me from that. I know Kushi, Lava are my sons. My love for Janaki remains as before."

For Janaki's purification the gods, headed by Brahma appeared on the scene. All on a sudden sweet scented breeze began to blow.

In the meantime, Janaki clad in red, with down-cast look, and with joined palms said, "If I have never thought of any person, but of Ram, then let mother Earth be divided and let me enter into it. If I have adored Ram with my body and soul, let mother Earth be divided and let me enter into it. If this be true that I do not know any body besides Ram, let Mother Earth be divided and let me enter into it."

When Janaki was taking this solemn vow, a magnificent throne rose from the bowels of the earth. Goddess Earth took Sita in her embrace and disappeared below.* Flowers were showered from above and the gods sang her praise.

When Janaki disappeared below the ground, Ram leaned against a wooden pole and began to weep with a downcast look.

After crying for a long time, Ram became inflamed with rage and sorrow. He then challenged goddess Earth to return his Sita to him, or he threatened to destroy it immediately. Then Brahma told Ram not to forget that he was Vishnu himself and that he would be united with Sita again in the heavenly region. Brahma then said that every incident of Ram's life had been recorded in the Ramayan.

Ram then dissolving the gathering entered the hut of Valmiki with Kushi, Lava and passed the night there in intense sorrow.

After Sita's disappearance, Ram grew very sad and dismissed the gathering of the princes and people. He always thought of Sita and did not take a second wife, but passed his days in thinking of her, and the golden statue of Sita supplied the place of his wife at the time of sacrifice.

* Here Sita disappears like Proserpine, in Greek legends, the daughter of Ceres, an allegory representing the fertility of the soil and harvest in this way. Perhaps, on this analogy, Sita has been identified by many with ploughshare, as the name etymologically implies and the whole of Ramayan with the allegorical representation of the progress of Aryan cultivation into the Deccan.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE AFTER-DEATH.

Ram ruled for many thousand years. Worshipful Kaushalya died first, then Sumitra and Kaikeyi were united with Dasarath in heaven.

After some time, Judhagit the king of Kekaya, came to see Ram, and urged Ram for the conquest of the Gandharva King, Sailusha, living on the north of the Indus. Ram then appointed Taksha and Pushkala, the two sons of Bharat, as rulers of the Gandharva region. Bharat followed his sons with a large army and established Taksha in Taxila and Pushkala in Pushkalavati as their respective rulers. Bharat then came back to Ayodhya after five years.

Ram then made Lakshman's two sons, Angada and Chandraketu, the rulers of Karupatha. Ram brought Karupatha under subjection and founded the cities of Angadia for Angada and Chandrakanta for Chandraketu in Malwa. Lakshman went with Angada and Bharat with Chandraketu. Lakshman and Bharat returned to Ayodhya after a year. Thus eleven thousand years of their life were spent.

After sometime, Death himself came in the guise of a hermit one evening, and told the sentry to inform Ram that he was an envoy of Maharshi Ativala and wanted to see Ram. Lakshman informed Ram of that and Ram asked him to bring the envoy without delay. On Ram's enquiry about the cause of his arrival, the envoy said, that if Ram wished his own good then he must hear him in privacy, and whoever would see them together, or overhear them, would be put to death by Ram. This was what the Muni desired, if Ram agreed to it, then he could tell Ram everything. Ram agreed to the envoy's words and asked Lakshman to stand as a sentry at the door, so that none could enter there, or overhear their talks. Ram then asked the envoy to deliver his message.

The envoy then said that he had been sent by Brahma to remind Ram that the gods were waiting for him and it was time for Ram to return to heaven. Ram then expressed his willingness to act according to Brahma's wishes.

When Ram was thus engaged in conversation with Time—the Destroyer of all things—Maharshi Durvasha came to see Ram. Lakshman asked him to wait as Ram was busy. Thereupon, Durvasha burned with rage and threatened to curse Ram and his brother and all their people.

Lakshman, in fear, preferred his own death to such a terrible curse. He then entered the room and informed Ram of Durvasha's arrival.

Ram then dismissed Time and came out to meet Durvasha. On seeing him, Ram asked what was his pleasure; thereupon, Durvasha said that he had been fasting for one thousand years and he would break his fast that day, so Ram should feed him.

Ram entertained Durvasha with great care, then thinking of his promise before Time—the Destroyer—Ram became overwhelmed with grief. He understood that the time for his separation from his brothers had arrived.

Lakshman finding Ram thus cast down with sorrow, said, "O worshipful lord! Do not be sorry for me. Such is the course of events. Now abandon me and fulfil your pledge." Then Ram stated everything to Vashista. Vashista advised Ram to give up Lakshman, and Ram abandoned Lakshman accordingly.

Lakshman then did not enter his place, but with tearful eyes went to the Saraju. He then sat on its bank and suspended all his animation. Indra then took away Lakshman to heaven.

Ram was overwhelmed with sorrow by renouncing Lakshman. He then thought of installing Bharat on the throne and of repairing to the forest. But Bharat refused it and asked Ram to establish Kusha on Koshala, and Lava in North Koshala. Envoys then went to Shatru-ghna to inform of Ram's voluntary abdication to repair

to the forest with Bharat. The envoys informed Shatrughna about Ram's decision of going to heaven after establishing Kusha in Kushavati and Lava in Sravasti.

Shatrughna called the people and told them that his end was also nigh. Then placing Subahu on Mathura, Shatrughna came to Ayodhya. Ram finding Shatrughna quite resolved did not dissuade him any further.

At that time, the Vanaras, Bhallukas and the Rakshasas came to Ayodhya to witness Ram about to renounce his life. Sugriva said that he had installed Angada on the throne and he too was determined to die. Ram then said to Vibhishan that he would live so long men would live, and his kingdom would exist on earth as long as the legend of Ram would continue. Ram then told Hanuman to live so long as his life-story would continue on earth.

Ram then told Jamvuvan and Mainda to live till Kaliyuga, but Vibhishan would live till the Doom's day.

On the following morning, Ram issued from the palace to give up his life by yoga on the bank of the Saraju. Beasts and birds followed him to witness that great sight. When Ram was to descend into the Saraju, Brahma said, "O Vishnu ! Come to your heaven."

Ram, then shuffled off his mortal coil ; Bharat, Shatrughna too, by yoga followed Ram to heaven. Sugriva, their faithful ally, followed suit ; his effulgent spirit entered the sun.

This is Uttarkanda composed by Valmiki and honoured by Brahma. He who reads only a stanza of it is absolved from all sins. Ayodhya was for a long time a deserted city, then it again became populous on getting a king named Rishabha for its ruler.

The Ramayan with the Uttarakanda has been composed by Procheta's son, Valmiki even Brahma has admitted it.*

THE END

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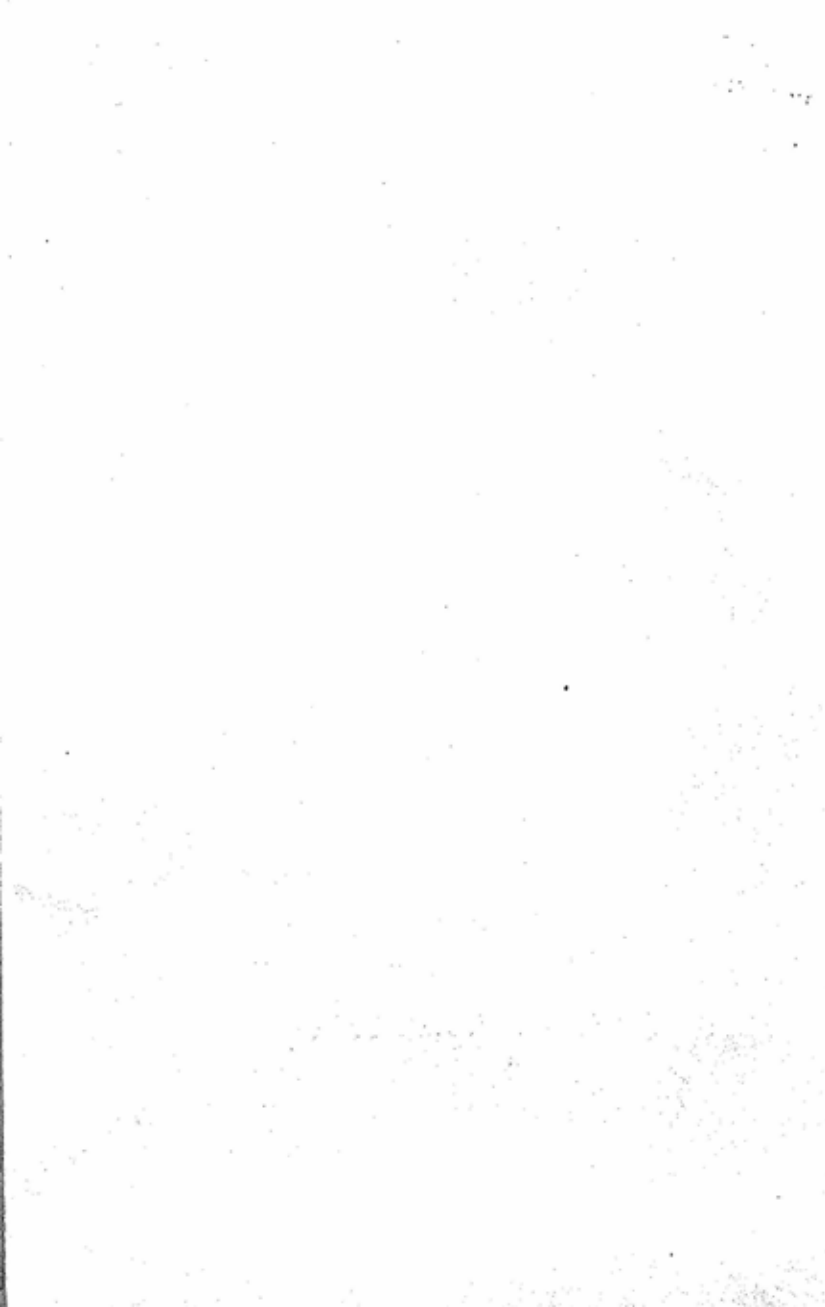
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